THE HISTORICAL NOVELS OF SIX VICTORIAN WRITERS: THACKERAY, DICKENS, CHARLES KINGSLEY, GEORGE ELIOT, MEREDITH AND WALTER PATER.

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"'Tis pleasant sure to see one's name in print:
A book's a book, although there's nothing in't."

— Byron.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, the historical novel had, mainly owing to Scott, come to be recognised as a distinct department of fiction with fairly definite conventions established by practice and justified by the critical prefaces and observations of its practitioners and the comments of professional critics. But Thackeray, Dickens, Kingsley, George Eliot and Meredith had served their apprenticeship as writers of fiction of another class (Pater had written no novels before Marius the Epicurean (1885), but he had produced some essays of a semi-fictitious kind), and attained maturity before they attempted historical novels. Consequently it was natural that they should adapt the historical novel to their own particular genius instead of walking blindly in the path mapped out by Scott. In order, then, to estimate how far they departed from the existing designs for historical fiction, how much in their work is individual, and what contribution they made to the historical novel, it is necessary to take a retrospective glance at the novels of their predecessors in this line and to try to establish a general working definition of historical fiction.

An empirical critic might say that the historical novel is that which was practised by its leading exponents, such as Scott, Dumas and Victor Hugo, and that by an analysis of and deduction

from their works we might establish its distinguishing traits. True, a definition of a literary kind may be framed from a study of the practice of its principal exponents; but even their works do not exhaust its possibilities, and if we were to define the historical novel in terms only of Scott, Dumas and Hugo it might be difficult to find room within our definition for a novel, like Vittoria (1867) or Marius, which have few of the orthodox features. It seems better to work by the antithetical method and try to realise the distinguishing marks of an historical novel by way of contrast with the ordinary novel which deals with contemporary affairs.

One criterion of the historical novel that appears sufficiently obvious is that it should introduce events, or personages, of historical importance, or both. Though Thackeray shows how these ingredients can be reduced to a minimum, such a reduction tends to unfix his novels from a definite past. But it is not enough for the historical novelist to introduce public events to date his story, as it were; they must be an integral part of it, or somehow influence it, or, in other words, they must affect the fortunes of the characters; otherwise there is no particular reason for throwing the story into the past. No doubt the characters of novels with a contemporary setting may be influenced by the public events of their time, but if the writer chooses he can isolate his characters from political and religious influences to a degree that the historical novelist cannot do.

No historical novelist can ignore those influences as a domestic novelist, like Jane Austen, can. "To Jane Austen," Professor Grierson says, "the naval wars of England were important only as a means of supplying her heroes with prize-money, and so enabling them to marry her quick-witted, satirical heroines"[1]. The fortunes of Jane Austen's characters are affected by their own dispositions or by the action of character on character; they seem to possess more freedom of choice than the personages in historical novels.

Some novels which present pictures of the period in which they were themselves composed may have historical significance for succeeding generations, particularly if they are concerned with social questions or political or military affairs, and if they show how the lives of the characters are affected by them. Indeed practically every novel on a theme contemporaneous with its composition, if its picture of contemporary life is fairly true, may become a document for the student of social history and manners. But some novels descriptive of life at the period of composition are really historical fiction from the beginning in that they show the lives of fictitious persons determined by actual events, such as the Great War. Galsworthy's Forsyte Saga (1906-21), a modern comedy, might justifiably be termed an historical novel, especially in its earlier volumes when the writer

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1. Background of English Literature by Professor Grierson (London; 1925) P.5.

outlines the social changes that marked the close of the last century, such as the decline in political power of the upper class and the breakdown of Victorian moral conventions.

But if we are to exclude novels depicting society contemporaneous with the time of writing from the class of historical novels, we must fall back on the author's intention as a criterion. Unless the author can see the period he describes in historical perspective, unless he is able to select from it those events and personages that posterity considers significant and to include social manners and accessories which date the period because they have become obsolete or obsolescent, he can scarcely make it the setting for an historical novel as generally understood. Obviously an author cannot view the chaos of contemporary life with this historical vision, although in a rapidly changing society a long time need not elapse before a period can be seen in the necessary perspective. Scott was especially fortunate in this respect as he lived at a time when Scottish society had changed considerably from what it had been only fifty or sixty years earlier, and old people whom he knew could still recall the political and social conditions of the period of the '45. Meredith in Vittoria was writing only about twenty years after the events described in the novel took place, but it was possible then to view the early abortive rising in relation to the final triumph of the cause of Italian emancipation and to realise the importance of Mazzini's influence.

An historical novel as a rule is concerned more with external details than is non-historical fiction, although this distinction obviously needs qualification. A contemporary novel can have, if the writer desires, far more detailed descriptions of externals than an historical novel, but on the other hand, the contemporary novelist can, if he wishes, take all these for granted and concentrate on other aspects. In the historical novel a considerable amount of attention to externals is essential, if the life of the particular period is to be suggested at all. Whereas the contemporary novelist can assume that his reader knows the manners, customs, amusements, and habits of life likely to be those of his characters, the historical novelist is obliged to incorporate such details freely for they form the principal method of recreating a past age. Hence the historical novelist must in general have more recourse to research for his material than has the writer of a contemporary novel. The latter is able to depend more upon personal knowledge and experience for most of his novel, although he must often make a special study of his background and accessories, if he proposes to describe a locality in detail. Moreover, the writer of novels of contemporary life is always able to verify his work by comparing it with the reality, but the historical novelist has to accept the testimony of others: he cannot turn back the page of history. He is dependent entirely on his sources for much of his material.

It might be possible to write an historical novel in which

externals could be largely dispensed with, or implied rather than described, if, say, the theme were not so much physical events and the conflict of character with character, as mental events and the clash between two rival faiths on a sensitive mind. But even in such a novel some method of dating it would be necessary. If the novelist wanted to avoid describing the daily activities of the men of the time, he would still be obliged to detail their thought. Although the novelist who describes the intellectual background instead of the social may seem to detach his story from a fixed setting in time, this is not so, for particular intellectual or spiritual conflicts can occur only at particular times; they assume different aspects at different periods. One condition, then, of an historical novel is that it generally shows special attention to the external setting. If not, it has to give something else of the past in detail. To sum up, then, we may say that, roughly speaking, the main characteristics of an historical novel are that it deals with a period sufficiently remote from the author's own life-time to be seen in perspective and to present a contrast to the period at which it is composed, and that the historical events and persons introduced should have a definite influence on the development of the story.

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Although the mingling of fact with fiction in greater or

less degree is as old as literature itself, and although many unwitting anticipations of historical fiction may be found far back, the historical novel proper is one of the most recent departments of fiction. From its very nature it could not have existed until writers became interested in the past for its own sake; until an historic sense had developed; until they realised that history stretches back from them in an ever-changing procession and that all past times are not simply to be lumped together as equally distant; and until they approached history in a critical spirit, able to distinguish fact from fiction. Again the appearance of historical fiction was dependent on the evolution of the novel itself. Until novelists reached a certain stage of perfection, attained some definiteness of purpose, and grasped the real function of their art, historical fiction was impossible. It was necessary for interest in the past to be combined with a sense of the significance of individual life, the universality of interest implicit in the emotions of individual characters. The novel into which Scott wove the materials of history was the novel which Richardson, Fielding, Smollett, etc. had perfected. Hence the historical novel, as we know it, could hardly have emerged before the end of the eighteenth century, at least, by which time history and the novel had both reached maturity and popularity.

Epics, like the Iliad and the Odyssey, the Aeneid and Beowulf, no doubt enshrine actual historical facts, but they are so mixed

up with mythological and legendary features that the writers had obviously little historic sense. Greek literature, however, provided outside its epics the first example of a work that marks an embryonic stage in the evolution of the historical novel, namely the Cyropaedia of Xenophon, which is, all the same, more of a political tract than a novel, and in which the historical element is not very large. Medieval romances, such as the Arthurian cycle and those on the subject of Charlemagne incorporate historical features, but the writers were evidently unaware where history stopped and imagination began. The chroniclers made a more serious attempt to get at the truth, but they were also unable to separate romance from history. On the whole the Middle Ages lacked the sense of historical perspective; everything in the past seemed equally remote and the externals of life, the costumes, customs and manners, were assumed to be the same in all past and contemporary periods and in all places. Medieval writers' ideas on the past were thoroughly anachronistic.

Even in Shakespeare's historical plays the past is seen through Elizabethan eyes, although the Elizabethans were beginning to have some historic sense and plenty of historical interest. But Shakespeare's handling of history does resemble in some respects that of the historical novelist. He takes his material from sources that gave the traditional views of events and characters and modifies it when necessary for dramatic purposes.

Like the historical novelist, Shakespeare introduces fictitious characters into his historical plays and give humanity and life to the historical figures. Scott who acknowledged his debt to Shakespeare admittedly drew his material from sources that were sometimes unfamiliar to the general reader, but he liked to weave ballads, popular poems and folk-lore into his novels. Shakespeare was ready to alter historical details for dramatic effect, as Scott boldly admitted he also did in his novels. Naturally Shakespeare recreated the dramatic spectacles of history, the battles, coronations, assassinations, etc., and Scott, even though he was himself temperamentally inclined to dwell on the impressive scenes of history, may have owed something to his example in this respect. In one point, however, Shakespeare differs from the historical novelists, namely in his concentration on the historical events and characters, compared with whom the fictitious ones are unimportant, though it might be argued that Falstaff and his friends who claim so much of the reader's interest in Henry IV and Falconbridge in King John are virtually fictitious characters. Shakespeare was dramatising history; the fictitious parts were merely inserted to provide relief: whereas Scott was telling a fictitious story; the history was meant to add body and interest.

Had the novel been in existence in the Elizabethan age it is certain that history which was freely introduced into drama and into poems such as those of Drayton and Daniel would have

overflowed into fiction. But as it was, the nearest thing to historical fiction the Elizabethan age produced was Nash's Wild Adventures of Jack Wilton or The Unfortunate Traveller (1594). Jack Wilton belongs, indeed, to the picaresque school of fiction. But the scene is placed in the days of Henry VIII; historical characters such as the Earl of Surrey etc., are introduced, and historical episodes are described with realistic power. In a similar vein but of less importance are Lodge's two historical romances: The History of Robert, Second Duke of Normandy, surnamed Robin the Divell (1591) and The Life and Death of William Longbeard (1593). Lodge makes little attempt to delineate character, or to restore the life of the past or to paint an historical background. Incidents alone, with picturesque detail, are relied upon for the interest of his stories. Deloney's Thomas of Reading or the Sixe Worthie Yeomen of the West (1596) has its scene in the times of Henry I and Thomas Cole, its hero, was an actual personage.

For most of the seventeenth century any fiction that could be described as historical or rather that had a tincture of the historical was produced in France. The extraordinary voluminousness of the French romancers more than anything else has secured a place in literary history for their works. They made no attempt to recreate the life and manners of a past period or to introduce historical events, but they gave historical or classical names to their characters. More important, however,

was the fact that these romances were often historical in another sense, that is, they were romans à clef, introducing contemporary personages under names drawn from history or mythology in the same manner as Spenser did in the Faerie Queen (1590-6), where Gloriana represents Elizabeth and Artegal, Lord Grey. [redacted] One of the first of these romances Argenis (1621) written in Latin by John Barclay of Franco-Scottish extraction, was partly a political treatise and partly an historical romance dealing with the affairs of the previous century. Under classical names actual personages, like Queen Elizabeth, Henry IV of France, the Guises, Philip V of Spain, Catherine de Medici and Calvin, figure in the story. Honoré d'Urfé's pastoral romance, Astrea (1610-27), though celebrated for other reasons, has an historical aspect. The story professes to take place in fifth century Gaul, and scanty and imperfect though d'Urfé's knowledge of this period was, critics have credited him with a genuine attempt to suggest its customs and institutions. As in Argenis there are concealed references to affairs of the immediate past. Most of the seventeenth century romance-writers followed this practice of writing allegorised historical fiction, as it were. Madeleine de Scudéry in Artamène, ou le Grand Cyrus (1649-53) brought into her romance the princes, princesses, and writers who adorned French society in the reign of Louis XIV. She introduced also

under feigned names real incidents, like the siege of Dunkirk (1646) and the battle of Lens (1648). These French romances were translated into English and eagerly read, with the result that they naturally produced some imitators, such as Parthenissa (1664-77) by Roger Boyle. The latter work, an imitation of Mme. de Scudéri's romances, is partly an historical allegory and mixes up several Roman wars.

Amidst all the modernising of history in which the French romance-writers indulged it is evident that some of them were beginning to have some glimmerings of an historical sense. La Calprenède, whose three works - Cassandre (1642) Cléopatre (1648), and the unfinished Faramond (1661), were designed to give a compendious survey of universal history, cites as his authorities the Latin historians. He draws a distinction between the legendary or entirely imaginative medieval romances and his own which reproduce history amplified and embellished by invention and fancy. The French historical romances may not be of great intrinsic merit and their importance in the development of the English historical novel is capable of being exaggerated, but they show at least that writers were beginning to realise the romantic attraction of an historical setting and also perceived how the invention of the novelist may be stimulated or supplemented by recourse to the story of actual personages and their actions.

Whatever influence the French romances may have had on the English novel in general, it cannot be detected in the novels

of Defoe, who came nearer to historical fiction proper than any writer since the Elizabethans. True, The Journal of the Plague Year (1722) and The Memoirs of a Cavalier (1727) are not strictly speaking historical novels. But in manner they have the semblance of history owing to the circumstantiality of Defoe's method, and his realistic use of details. Defoe's desire to delude his readers into believing that The Journal of the Plague Year was authentic history and The Memoirs of a Cavalier authentic biography, is not normally the intention of the historical novelist who attempts to secure illusion, rather than delusion, on the part of his readers. Yet Defoe's novels must have suggested to succeeding writers (although it has been stated that his influence was neither deep nor widespread) that the link between fictitious and historical narratives is very close, that the one is the mirror and the other the substance of reality, and that if fiction can imitate history, history can also be transformed into fiction. At all events Defoe's narratives with an historical setting are the nearest approach to historical fiction proper, before the advent of the golden age of history in the eighteenth century.

With the exception of writers like Bacon, Clarendon and Burnet, history was mainly the province of antiquarians until Hume, Robertson and Gibbon raised it to the level of a literary art and made it popular with the reading public. As a result of their labours history was studied in a more critical manner and a taste for it was created, without which the historical

novel could not have come into existence. At the same time the novel had been developing and in the hands of Richardson, Fielding, Smollett and Sterne had become a medium of great possibilities. Smollett in some ways was the most suggestive for new developments, including the historical; for he introduced some real events and persons into his novels. In these circumstances it was natural that a novelist looking about him for material should exploit this newly grown interest in history. Another factor, the quickening of the romantic spirit, was more or less directly responsible for the increased interest shown by writers in the possibilities of the past and for their effecting a conjunction between history and the novel, because one branch of the romantic is the distant in time and what is possible in other conditions.

Writers of Gothic romances, such as Walpole in The Castle of Otranto (1764), were desirous of finding a setting different from that of everyday experience into which marvellous incidents might be introduced with a greater degree of plausibility. Sometimes this effect might be gained by placing the scene in a remote country, as in Beckford's Vathek (1786), but another and commoner method was to place it in a remote age. Thus the terror-novelist secured a readiness on the part of the reader to suspend his critical judgment for the time being.

But plainly this ultra-romantic exploitation of history differs from the manner in which it is treated in the later historical novel. In the terror-romances, in fact, the historical element is slight, and is never much more than a vague background to a succession of incidents of a super-natural character; scarcely

any real persons or events are introduced. Yet the terror romances familiarised readers with the habit of introducing historical or pseudo-historical ingredients into a fictitious composition and on the other hand they provoked a painstaking antiquarian, Joseph Strutt, into exposing their shocking liberties with historical fact by producing himself an example of what an historical novel should be. He also intended to expose the ignorance of would-be historical novelists who wrote without what Strutt conceived to be a sufficient knowledge of their historical background. Queenhoo Hall which gave a careful description, based on the author's research, of the manners and amusements of Englishmen in the reign of Henry VI, was never finished by Strutt, but it was completed by Scott and published in 1808. The author's intention, at least, was excellent, judging from the following remarks in the preface :- "The chief purpose of the work is to make it the medium of conveying much useful instruction, imperceptibly, to the minds of such readers as are disgusted at the dryness usually concomitant with the labours of the antiquary, and present to them a lively and pleasing representation of the manners and amusements of our forefathers, under the form most likely to attract their notice"[1]. It was hopelessly pedantic and the dialogue must have been well-nigh incomprehensible, as it was full of archaisms, such as we find in a phrase, used by Scott in the concluding

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1. See Preface to Queenhoo Hall (1808 edition) i-ii; quoted again by Scott in his General Preface to Waverley Novels, 1829.

portion: "dearly abye his outrecuidance". Queenhoo Hall was a failure, but, at least, it had a negative value, for it taught Scott how not to write historical fiction.

If Scott did not create the historical romance, he transformed it to such an extent that earlier novels with an element of the historical bear the same relation to his works as Gorboduc does to the tragedies of Shakespeare. Hitherto the historical had been swamped by the romantic interest or it had been presented with a heavy-handed antiquarianism without a spark of dramatic vitality which swamped the story. The problem that Scott had to solve was how to find a balance between the claims of fiction and of history. To modern readers it may seem axiomatic that the historical novel can hardly present historical facts with pedantic exactitude and that minor errors of chronology may be pardonable in an imaginative representation of the past; the artistic requirements of the novel must receive more consideration than painstaking historical accuracy. But the problem can hardly have been so easy to solve in the days of Scott; and that the adjustment of the claims of history and fiction formed an important issue in critical debate is evident from his prefaces and those of Bulwer Lytton.

Scott was well fitted by temperament and training to strike the necessary balance between fact and fiction. His knowledge of history was too extensive to permit him to take the fantastic liberties with the past which writers of the terror novel allowed themselves. But his knowledge of history was not that of a detached, academic enquirer; he was attracted to the past by the

fact that life in its different periods was, or appeared to be to the romanticist who looked back, more surprising, dramatic, various, and interesting, as we gather from the following statement of his love of the past. "My principal object in these excursions," he says, "was the pleasure of seeing romantic scenery or what afforded me at least equal pleasure, the places which had been distinguished by remarkable historical events. The delight with which I regarded the former, of course had general approbation, but I often found it difficult to procure sympathy with the interest I felt in the latter. Yet to me, the wandering over the field of Bannockburn was the source of more exquisite pleasure than gazing upon the celebrated landscape from the battlements of Stirling Castle. I do not by any means infer that I was dead to the feeling of picturesque scenery; on the contrary, few delighted more in its general effect. But I was unable with the eye of a painter to dissect the various parts of the scene, to comprehend how the one bore on the other, to estimate the effect which various features of the view had in producing its leading and general effect. ... But show me an old castle or a field of battle, and I was at home at once, filled it with its combatants in their proper costume, and over-whelmed my hearers by the enthusiasm of my description. ..."[1].

It was inevitable that his representation of history should

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1. Lockhart: Life of Sir Walter Scott Chap. I (This chapter was written by Scott himself.) P.15.

be dramatic and romantic and that material acquired by research should be transformed by a vivid imagination. Moreover, Scott was a popular novelist, one who was always sensitive to the demands of the reading public, and he had the good sense to see that readers would be repelled by large pellets of history with a thin gilding of fiction. His shrewd comment on Queenhoo Hall indicates his early realisation of this fact:- "Queenhoo Hall was not, however, very successful. I thought I was aware of the reason, and supposed that by rendering his language too ancient, and displaying his antiquarian knowledge too liberally, the ingenious author had raised up an obstacle to his own success. Every work designed for mere amusement must be expressed in language easily comprehended, ... "[1]. Besides refraining from displaying his knowledge of the period too liberally Scott saw that facts which in actual life had not conveniently arranged themselves in a sequence proper for fiction would have to be re-arranged, when necessary. He anticipated his critics by cheerfully admitting his ~~adjustment~~ manipulation of historical facts. "It is true," he writes, "that I neither can, nor do, pretend to the observation of complete accuracy, even in matters of outward costume, language and manners. But the same motive which prevents my writing the dialogue of the piece in Anglo-Saxon or in Norman-French, and which prohibits my sending forth to the public this essay printed with the types of Caxton or Wynken de Worde, prevents my attempting to confine myself within

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1. General Preface to Waverley Novels.

the limits of the period in which my story is laid. It is necessary, for exciting interest of any kind, that the subject assumed should be, as it were, translated into the manners, as well as the language, of the age we live in."[1] Scott put the matter more explicitly by regretting "that though he made liberal use of the power of departing from the reality of history, he felt by no means confident of having brought his story into a pleasing compact, and sufficiently intelligible form."[2].

Yet this power of departing from the reality of history was to be exercised with discretion and no flagrant inaccuracies were to be introduced which would shatter abruptly the reader's "willing suspension of disbelief"[3]. Thus the novelist's "language must not be exclusively obsolete and unintelligible; but he should admit, if possible, no word or turn of phraseology betraying an origin directly modern. It is one thing to make use of the language and sentiments which are common to ourselves and our forefathers, and it is another to invest them with the sentiments and dialect exclusively proper to their descendants."[4] In dealing with the past, and especially with remote periods, Scott asserts that the novelist may exercise some judicious modernising. Perhaps Scott's practice does not always come up

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1. Dedicatory Epistle to Ivanhoe (1819)
2. Introduction to Quentin Durward (1823).
3. Coleridge: Biographia Literaria Chap. II.
4. Dedicatory Epistle to Ivanhoe.

to the level of his theory. The amount of historical comment and description of manners which he introduces, as if they were stage properties, seems excessive to modern readers, but it is well to bear in mind that Scott had probably to convey historical information that modern writers can take for granted. Yet by comparison with Bulwer Lytton Scott uses historical accessories sparingly.

Scott's greatness as an historical novelist lies in his grasp of the fact that, in spite of the changing historical background, human nature remains in essentials the same, although it is modified in some respects by different environments. "The passions, the sources from which these (sentiments and manners) must spring in all their modifications, are generally the same in all ranks and conditions, all countries and ages; and it follows, as a matter of course, that the opinions, habits of thinking, and actions, however influenced by the peculiar state of society, must still, upon the whole, bear a strong resemblance to each other"[1]. Accordingly he insists that interest should be directed to character rather than to the historical or the social background. The object of Waverley (1814), he says, "is more a description of men than manners."[2] He intends to throw the force of the narrative "upon the character and passions of the actor; - those passions common to men in all ages of society, ..."[3] But he loved all the

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1. Dedicatory Epistle to Ivanhoe.
2. Waverley Chap. I.
3. Ibid.

types of character which (though the individual embodying them might have unvarying human characteristics) belonged to particular periods.

It is interesting to study the prefaces of Scott in which he outlines his theories of the historical novel precisely for the reason that the problems he discussed and practically settled did not trouble any of his successors, save Lytton. Neither Thackeray, nor Dickens, nor Kingsley, nor George Eliot, nor Meredith, nor Pater seem to have had any doubt that the fictitious is more important than the historical and that minor inaccuracies are pardonable in the novelist's picture of the past. They all accepted Scott's convention that the principal character, whose fortunes constitute the plot, should be fictitious, or if historical, so remote from the general reader that he can be represented as freely as a fictitious character, and that the historical characters should generally be subordinated to the fictitious. In actual practice Scott's historical personages, like Louis XI, in Quentin Durward, sometimes assume more importance than the hero, but in none of the novels of his successors, with the exception of Hypatia (1853) Hereward the Wake (1865), and Romola (1863), do the historical figures attract so much of the attention of the author and of the reader.

~~To sum up we can say that~~ The historical novel as it was made by Scott may be defined as a narrative set in an historical period, having as the thread joining the episodes the fortunes and the love-story of an unhistorical hero and an unhistorical

heroine, but introducing - often as the main interest, - historical persons whose activities as recorded in history or as invented for the purposes of the novel influence the lives of the hero and of the heroine, and describing both historical events and the actual manners and externals of the period.

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Scott's spectacular success with the historical novel naturally produced a crop of imitators at home and abroad. Among his English followers, G.P.R. James and Harrison Ainsworth rivalled his productivity without contributing anything of any importance to the historical novel. But their contemporary Bulwer Lytton merits fuller consideration. Lytton had enough perspicacity to see that nothing can be gained by following too closely one like Scott who had achieved mastery in his particular kind of historical fiction. He saw that it was necessary to vary the kind. Scott had used history as a succedaneum to romance; he had given a greater semblance of substance and reality to fictitious characters and imaginary incidents by associating them skilfully with historical personages and events. "There are two ways", says Lytton, "of employing the materials of History in the service of Romance: the one consists in lending to ideal personages, and to an imaginary fable, the additional interest to be derived from historical groupings: the other, in extracting the main interest of romantic narrative from History itself. Those who adopt the former mode are at liberty to exclude all that does not contribute to theatrical effect or picturesque composition; their fidelity

to the period they select is towards the manners and costume, not towards the precise order of events, the moral causes from which the events proceeded, and the physical agencies by which they were influenced and controlled. The plan thus adopted is unquestionably the more popular and attractive, and, being favoured by the most illustrious writers of historical romance, there is presumptive reason for supposing it to be also that which is the more agreeable to the art of fiction"[1]. Yet, though the former method had proved the more popular Lytton considered that its potentialities had been fully explored by Scott. "The great author of Ivanhoe, and those among whom, abroad and at home, his mantle was divided, had employed History to aid Romance; I contented myself with the humbler task to employ Romance in the aid of History, - to extract from authentic but neglected chronicles, and the unfrequented storehouse of Archaeology, the incidents and details that enliven the dry narrative of facts to which the general historian is confined, - construct my plot from the actual events themselves, and place the staple of such interest as I could create in reciting the struggles, and delineating the characters of those who had been the living actors in the real drama. For the main materials of the three Historical Romances I have composed, I consulted the original authorities of the time with a care as scrupulous, as if intending to write, not a fiction but a history. And having formed the best judgment I could of the events and

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1. Preface to the third edition of Harold (Knebworth edition) xi.

characters of the age, I adhered faithfully to what, as an Historian, I should have held to be the true course and true causes of the great political events, and the essential attributes of the principal agents. Solely in that inward life which, not only as apart from the more public and historical, but, which, as almost wholly unknown, becomes the fair domain of the poet, did I claim the legitimate privileges of fiction, and even here I employed the agency of the passions only so far as they served to illustrate what I believed to be the genuine natures of the beings who had actually lived, and to restore the warmth of the human heart to the images recalled from the grave."[1] The same conception of historical fiction is stated in Rienzi (1835). "Its (Rienzi's) interest," he says, "is rather drawn from a faithful narration of historical facts, than from the inventions of fancy. And the success of this experiment confirms me in my belief, that the true mode of employing history in the service of romance, is to study diligently the materials as history; conform to such views of the facts as the author would adopt, if he related them in the dry character of historian; and obtain that warmer interest which fiction bestows, by tracing the causes of the facts in the characters and emotions of the personages of the time. The events of his work are thus already shaped to his hand - the characters already created - what remains for him is the inner, not outer, history of man - the chronicle of the human heart; and it is by this that

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1. Preface to Harold xii.

he introduces a new harmony between character and event, and adds the complete solution of what is actual and true, by those speculations of what is natural and probable, which are out of the province of history, but belong especially to the philosophy of romance."[1].

If Lytton had translated his theories scrupulously into practice he might have established a distinct variety of the historical novel, one in which the novelist is more than half historian, and in which his first responsibility is towards the historical facts. Fictitious colouring will be used only to revivify historical figures and fiction will not be a substitute for truth, but the imaginative activity that supplements recorded facts when they came short of the truth. But Lytton is not so realistic in practice, as one might infer from his prefaces. He manages to "extract" a tolerably large amount of romance from history. Both Scott and Lytton were frankly romantic; whereas, with the exception of Kingsley, the historical novelists of the Victorian age were much less so. Lytton can be melodramatic also at times; his style is apt to grow rhetorical; and he likes the pageantry of coronations and trials. He prided himself on his fidelity to history, and laboriously transcribed into large note books all the material from historians which he thought would be useful for particular novels. But for all his concern with the historical background Lytton is no more realistic than Scott, and it is doubtful if his more laborious recreation

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1. Preface to the 1848 edition of Rienzi.

of personages and events gives one a juster impression of a period. Writing history in terms of romance is a difficult feat to execute with success, for the writer is liable to fall between two stools. His work may have too much invention and conjecture to possess historical value, and too much historical detail to be an attractive romance. The better method is to make the characters in the foreground fictitious and place them against a background which is unobstrusively but definitely historical. In Harold (1843) and The Last of the Barons (1843) Lytton tried to make the characters, with a few exceptions, historical as well as the background. That is to say, he tried to give a more biographical cast to the historical novel. But he had not sufficient selective and realistic powers to achieve success in this variety of historical fiction, though he, at least, drew attention to its potentialities. It is interesting to note that most modern historical novelists would almost accept the prefaces of Lytton as an expression of their intentions, although it is difficult to say how far, if at all, Lytton has directly influenced them. Certainly there are not many signs of his influence on Victorian writers of historical fiction, except possibly on Kingsley, who in Hypatia and Hereward the Wake took his principal characters from history.

CHAPTER II

The Historical Novels of Thackeray, BARRY LYNDON, VANITY FAIR, HENRY ESMOND, THE VIRGINIANS, and DENIS DURVAL[1].

I.

Thackeray presumably had read Scott with care and was sagacious enough to realise that nothing would be gained by following Scott's practice too closely or even with judicious modifications. Indeed, the completely different cast of his genius would free him from any temptation to imitate the novels of Scott, when he turned to historical fiction. Thackeray shows little signs of Scott's wide-ranging and vivid interest in the past; but one period, the eighteenth century, happened to attract him, owing to his intellectual affinities with its characteristic writers. He was saturated in the literature of the eighteenth century, and it was its social life that interested him rather than its political and military activities.

What aspects of it appealed to him are indicated in The Four Georges, where he writes: "Of a society so vast, busy, brilliant, it is impossible in four brief chapters to give a complete notion; but we may keep here and there into that bygone world of the Georges, see what they and their courts were like; glance at the people round about them; look

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1. ~~For their synopses, see Appendix A: I., II., III., IV., and V. respectively.~~

at past manners, fashions, pleasures, and contrast them with our own. I have to say thus much by way of preface, because the subject of these lectures has been misunderstood, and I have been taken to task for not having given grave historical treatises, which it never was my intention to attempt. Not about battles, about politics, about statesmen and measures of state, did I ever think to lecture you: but to sketch the manners and life of the old world."[1] Consequently his attitude is that of the memoir writer who gives a retrospective survey of a period which he has lived through and of which he can write out of the fullness of knowledge. He does not present the past in the dramatic fashion of Scott, but as it appears in the after-glow of memory which tones down dramatic episodes into harmony with the general, mellow colouring. Yet Thackeray writes of his period with more of the air of a contemporary than Scott does, partly because the age was less different from his own and partly because in any case he concentrated largely on likenesses instead of differences. Scott generally writes of the past in the manner of a modern sympathiser, one of exceptional imaginative power, it is true, but yet one who does not enter into the spirit of the age to the same extent as Thackeray.

Owing possibly to his taste for the eighteenth-century novelists and essayists and for the eighteenth century generally,

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1. The Four Georges 1855-60 (published in 1860: collier edition) p. 273.

and also because of his general outlook which is realistic and cynical, though modified by sentiment, Thackeray has far fewer romantic elements in his historical novels than Scott. There ~~is~~ was, for instance, none of the super-natural - omens, astrologers, apparitions and sooth-sayers - which Scott drew from the literature and the beliefs of the past ages of which he was writing. Thackeray wrote of a rationalistic age. He also discarded the conventional romantic plot, which depended mainly on the revelation of a secret which affected the fortunes of the hero or his relations with others. True, there is a hint of this romantic plot in Esmond, where there is some mystery about the parentage of the hero, but its revelation, though it has psychological effects, can scarcely be regarded as anything in the nature of a climax. Thackeray's conception of history also was less romantic than that of Scott; he was not carried away, for instance, by the romance of warfare, but saw it as a piece of tragic folly evoking brutal passions and resulting in scenes of sordid bloodshed. Perhaps Thackeray avoids descriptions of warfare, not only because he had no romantic illusions about it, but because he shows no great interest in what are commonly regarded as historical events of outstanding significance. Scott was no philosopher in the technical sense, but compared with Thackeray he did take some philosophical interest in historical movements and in racial differences,

as may be seen in Ivanhoe. But Thackeray showed little interest in the broad movements of history. The dominating figures of history apparently interested him as little for their own sakes as did great events. Instead of portraying them fully, like Scott, he introduces them casually, more or less because the reader expects to meet them in their particular period. His historical figures of colossal stature, like the Duke of Marlborough, are few in number. Usually they are men of letters who played an important part in the social life of their day. Addison and Steele were well known in the coffee-houses of London during Queen Anne's reign; they mixed in the society which they described in Tatler and Spectator. But the part they play in Esmond is after all only a minor one.

Generally speaking, Thackeray preferred the more humdrum realism of ordinary activities, although he idealises these often by his sentimental, retrospective manner. "I don't know," he writes, "how we should be curious of such trifles; but the chronicling of small-beer is the main business of life - people only differing as Tom Moore wisely says in one of his best poems, about their own peculiar tap."[1] This remark is applicable to his practice of historical fiction. He considered that the chronicling of "small beer" gave a more accurate impression of the life of society in a particular period than the description

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1. Irish Sketch Book (Collier edition) P. 81.

of more striking events. Accordingly, he discards or neglects as far as possible most of the historical elements which in Scott's novels seem of cardinal importance. Perhaps this does not impair the value of his novels as such, but as historical fiction it does, for the historical is a necessary ingredient of an historical novel and when it is reduced to a minimum the novel tends to lose its historical character and to become detached from a fixed period. ~~Thackeray does not altogether escape this danger.~~

II.

Barry Lyndon[1] may be considered as Thackeray's first historical novel. It was written in 1844, and seems to have given him more trouble than any of his earlier stories for he wrote: " 'Jan. 20 - In these days got through the fag-end of Chap. iv of Barry Lyndon with a great deal of dullness, unwillingness, and labour;' 'Feb. 17 - Passed the whole of these days .... reading for Barry Lyndon, and writing, with extreme difficulty, a sheet;' 'Feb. 21 - Wrote all day Barry Lyndon .... Continual labour annoys and excites me too much,' and 'Aug. 14 - At home all day .... with Barry Lyndon lying like a nightmare on my mind'"[2]

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1. Its full title was The Luck of Barry Lyndon, Esq., a romance of Last Century, by Fitzboodle.

2. See Thackeray's Diary for 1844, quoted by Lady Ritchie in Works with Biographical Introduction XXV-XXVI.

Thackeray's journeyto the East[1] was begun with Barry Lyndon yet unfinished, for at Malta the author noted on the first three days of November - "Wrote Barry, but slowly and with great difficulty." "Wrote Barry with no more success than yesterday." "Finished Barry after great throes, late at night."[2].

The story was published serially in Fraser's Magazine from Jan. to Dec. 1844, without an October instalment, but it created no sensation at all during its publication. Nobody seems to have suggested the re-publication of it till a dozen years afterwards[3]; that is to say till the publication of Vanity Fair (1848), Esmond (1852), and The Newcomes (1854-5) had placed the author in the forefront of contemporary literature. And there is no evidence that Thackeray himself had much regard for the story. His daughter, Lady Ritchie, has recorded :- "My father once said to me when I was a girl: 'you needn't read Barry Lyndon, you won't like it'"[4]. Of course, this advice is not convincing evidence of his dislike, as it is probable that Thackeray merely referred to the unpleasantness for a young girl

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1. Described in Notes of a Journey from Cornhill to Grand Cairo (1846).

2. See Works with Biographical Introduction XXXVI.

3. In 1856 the story forms the first part of the third volume of Thackeray's Miscellanies, when it was called Memoirs of Barry Lyndon, Esq., written by Himself.

4. Works with Biographical Introduction XXXIII.

of the theme.

Though the historical element in Barry Lyndon[1] is not of primary importance - though Barry is represented as confused about the causes of the Seven Years' War; though his knowledge of the American War of Independence is limited to the opportunity it gives for seeking a peerage by raising a company from his estates; and though his interest in historical personages is slight, hardly going beyond a bow to Frederick the Great, a short argument with a Dr. Johnson, and an interview with Lord North - yet the story of Barry's career presents in an epitomised form a vivid picture of social life in the eighteenth century. It resembles the picaresque novel which ranges freely from aristocratic circles to the sordidness of low life and introduces with impartiality nobles and common soldiers, parsons and highwaymen, generally giving a comprehensive view of the social scene, though mainly, it may be added, of the seamy side. Barry touches life at many points; his experiences illustrate the manner in which the soldier, the gambler, the adventurer, and the man of property lived in the eighteenth century. His prowess with the bottle was equalled by that of Fox and other prominent men, who, no doubt, like Barry, accounted for six bottles of wine, before they were helped to bed. Duelling was still common and the hero has "pinked" more men than even Lord Mohun in Esmond. Highwaymen still waylaid unprotected travellers, as Barry finds on his first journey from home, when he is unfortunate enough to rescue Mrs. Fitzsimon from them

1. For its sources see Appendix A. p.368.

and falls thereby into sharper hands. Stage-coaches were not then in frequent service, but the roads were busy with the horses and carriages of the gentry. Dublin was infested with beggars and poverty-stricken people, but young "bloods" there could make a small income go a long way. In London there was the usual round of balls, cards and routs; coffee-houses were being transformed into clubs, like White's and the Cocoa-tree, where Barry lost heavily at play. Barry Lyndon reflects the indulgences of a man of fashion in an age when the pursuit of pleasures was almost treated as a serious art.

Barry Lyndon, like the later novels, Esmond and Denis Duval and part of The Virginians, is alleged to be the memoirs of the hero. As in the case of the other heroes, Barry Lyndon writes his memoirs in his old age. "The memoirs seem to have been written about the year 1814, in that calm retreat which Fortune had selected for the author at the close of his life".[1] But the "calm retreat" in which Barry's memoirs were written was, as befitted one with his past, the debtor's prison instead of the comfortable domestic circumstances of Esmond and Denis Duval. Accordingly the reflections in which he indulges from time to time have more a note of vexation than the tender retrospective charm that marks those of the other two memoir-writers. Barry's

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1. Barry Lyndon p. 278 footnote.

candid, personal narrative is supplemented by a few foot-notes by the supposed editor, and a brief conclusion, not designed to give an outside view of his character but to supply facts which the narrator obviously could not do himself. But on the whole the autobiographical method is quite adequate for Thackeray's purpose in Barry Lyndon owing to its picaresque character. Experience had shown that the autobiographical form was well adopted for the picaresque novel, since the hero is always in the picture and there are few scenes in which he does not play a part and which he cannot describe as an eye-witness. Even if scenes at which the hero was not present have to be described, it can always be shown that he has got his information from a reliable source. The disadvantages of narration in the first person are more obvious in novels like Esmond, where there are important secondary characters as well as the hero and it is sometimes desirable to see and hear them in their own persons and not merely through the eyes of the principal character. For a picaresque novel, which makes no pretence to plot and the sole unity of which is provided by the personage of the hero the autobiographical method is the natural one, since the other characters are relatively unimportant and the disposition of the hero and his exploits, good or bad, form the main source of interest. Often in the eighteenth century ~~novel~~ fiction and in the picaresque novels the hero's personal narrative is broken by the interpolation of the life-story of some person he

meets (such as the German pastor Barry meets in King Freder: :ick's army) or by a story related by another character,as, for example, the "Tragical History of the Princess of X -- " in chapter VII of Barry Lyndon.

One disadvantage of the autobiographical form is that the narrator tends to become a shadowy figure, but this criticism certainly is not true of Barry Lyndon. On the contrary, its great merit is that the hero is fully revealed and implicitly condemned out of his own mouth; in none of his other historical novels is Thackeray's irony maintained so continuously and pene: :tratingly. Yet it is almost not irony since the supposed writer is not aware of it. In this concentration of ironic revelation of the hero's character, Barry Lyndon differs from the typical picaresque novel, such as those of Smollett, which is much more concerned with variety of incidents. At the same time it must be admitted that Thackeray's novel lacks the gusto and the knowledge of low life that are apparent in the works of La Sage, Defoe and Smollett.

Compared with Thackeray's other novels, Barry Lyndon is small in bulk, although it covers forty odd years in the life of the hero, until he is thrown into prison, and although the scene changes from Dublin to Germany, back to Dublin via various European capitals, then to London with an excursion to Devon. Plainly the novel could not cover this extent either of space or time had not the writer indulged in generalised or selective narrative. Thus his description of Dublin society is little more

than a few general comments on the poverty of the people and a catalogue of the diversions of fashionable circles in the city. Again, after Barry enlists he writes: "I never had a taste for anything but genteel company and hate all descriptions of low life. Hence my account of the society in which I at present found myself must of necessity be short...."[1] Thus, although Barry's military experiences convey an impression of the wretchedness and degrada:tion of the common soldiers and the demoralising conditions of army life, one misses in those chapters the detailed realism one finds in Smollett's or Defoe's first-hand descriptions of conditions on board warships and merchant vessels. Even Barry's gambling exploits and his means of securing his election to Parliament are also related in a generalised fashion. No doubt Thackeray was prevented by the decorous standards of his time from describing the vicious pursuits of his hero in any great detail, especially Barry's amorous achievements which Thackeray merely mentions in passing, but which certainly would have been narrated in a more intimate manner like that of Casanova by an eighteenth century writer. Or it may be that a generalised method was forced upon Thackeray by the wide scope of his subject and the infinite labour required to procure the material for a detailed description of Barry's manifold vicious habits. It may be also because Thackeray always generalised, or at least reviewed, the incidents.

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1. Barry Lyndon p. 276 N.

Whatever the reason Barry Lyndon has a greater appearance of con: :densation than any of Thackeray's other novels. Thackeray wanted to tell a life-story to show the progressive deterioration of a ~~man~~ man's character, but he did not want to take a life-time to do it. The incidents are not the most important thing. They are only typical illustrations of Barry's "rake's progress."

Barry Lyndon himself is not, as Thackeray remarks in a foot-note, " a hero of common pattern." Thackeray's general philosophy of life prevented him from choosing conventional heroes in any of his novels. There is scarcely a vice that Barry does not possess, either natural or acquired, but for all that he is so genial a blackguard, so obviously satisfied with himself and possessing so much Irish "blarney", that he is not such an awful example of worldliness as Thackeray perhaps intended him to be. Barry flourishes like the green bay-tree for a time, but he ends his life in prison, thus receiving the due meed of the wicked, and Thackeray interpolates a footnote at one point [1] emphasising the wickedness of his conduct towards his wife and asserting that he is typical of many husbands. Accordingly it is clear that Thackeray wished to signify his disapproval of the Barry Lyndons of this world, and probably meant the book to point a moral, though the character of Barry is not distorted for this purpose. This insertion of foot: :notes is possibly an artistic blunder. They are superfluous, since they add nothing to our knowledge of Barry that the reader is not capable of deducing for himself. They merely show how one of

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1. Barry Lyndon p. 276.

Barry's character would have been regarded by a typical Victorian and it is rather irritating to have an eighteenth century hero judged by the more Pharisaical standards of the nineteenth century. When Barry is allowed to moralise in a strain like Thackeray's own one experiences the same sense of incongruity. An adventurer of Barry's type is unlikely to exhibit the same sentiments as a Victorian gentleman like Thackeray. Fortunately Thackeray permits this moralising to occur on comparatively few occasions.

At the outset Barry is not very vicious; his mendacious boasting is hardly more than an amiable Irish characteristic. In point of fact there is a good deal of the Englishman's conception of the typical or stage Irishman - boasting, improvident and pleasure-loving - in Thackeray's portrait of Barry. Bernard Shaw, who discusses in the preface to John Bull's Other Island (1904) the typical Irishman, as he is in reality and as he appears to the English, describes the latter as somewhat similar to Barry. Broad: :bent, an Englishman, speaking to Haffigan, an Irishman, says: " I saw at once that you were a thorough Irishman, with all the faults and all the qualities of your race: rash and improvident but brave and good natured."[1] Barry, however, has more intelligence and shrewdness than the conventional stage Irishman. In fact he re: :presents the Irish character in its most corrupt form, such as Bernard Shaw describes in the following passage: " Blackguard, bully, drunkard, liar, foul-mouthed, flatterer, beggar, back-biter, venal functionary, corrupt judge, envious friend, vindictive opponent,

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1. John Bull's Other Island (constable edition) p. 9

unparalled political traitor: all these your Irishman may easily be just as he may be a gentleman (a species extinct in England, and nobody a penny the worse); but he is never quite the hysterical, nonsense-crammed, fact-proof, truth-terrified, un: :ballasted sport of all the bogey panics and all the silly enthus: :iasms that now calls itself 'God's Englishman' " [1] But Barry is corrupted by his facility in adapting himself to his company, and in the army he has practically in self-defence to allow his conscience to harden. Even when the full extent of his villainy becomes apparent the reader is constantly disarmed by the candid cheerfulness of Barry's disclosures . Thackeray, it has been pointed out, gives him a redeeming trait in his love for his young son but unfortunately the death-bed scene of the latter, although it is undeniably pathetic, strikes one as a trifle maud: :lin in parts. [2]

Apart from the hero there are some other characters well depicted. Barry's uncle the Chevalier has a certain strength of character which his more common place nephew cannot understand. Intellectually he is Barry's superior, and he has an incomparably better manner. He is gamester and diplomatist combined, with a certain amount of the discretion and polish proper to the latter profession. The conclusion of his career is remarkable for

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1. John Bull's Other Island p.p. VIII - IX.

2. "And taking a hand of his mother and mine in each of his little clammy ones, he begged us not to quarrel so, but love each other, so that we might meet again in heaven where Bully told him quarrelsome people never went." - Barry Lyndon p. 293

the same conflict between the claims of secular pleasures and religion which had marked his early life. It is peculiarly fitting that he should have eventually found refuge in the Irish college. This place was as suitable for his dignified spirit as the Fleet was for Barry's more vulgar sordid disposit: :ion.

Barry's mother and his wife, Lady Lyndon are also well drawn. His mother is an ignorant, bustling, vindictive woman, whose one good trait is her obvious devotion to her son and his interest. She has all his false family pride. She is greedy selfish and unprincipled, a fit mother for such a character as Barry.

Lady Lyndon herself is a more complex character. By a stroke of poetic justice, her treatment of her first husband, Sir Charles Lyndon, is more than avenged by the ill-treatment she receives at the hands of Barry. The interests which she manifests in letters and in theological questions, when Barry first encount :ers her, is obviously not very profound. It is merely the occupation of an idle, dissatisfied woman, anxious to acquire a reputation for herself. Her gradual yielding to Barry is very well described. The letters which she writes describing the effect that Barry has made on her emotions, the terror with which he inspires her, yet which she finds not unpleasing, are a very significant commentary on her character. She has a fatal streak of weakness, of impressionability, in her disposition, which eventually makes her succumb to his arts. After her

marriage, her pride is thoroughly subdued and her spirit broken, in spite of her occasional rebellious outbursts against her husband's authority.

But Sir Charles Lyndon is among the author's best creations. He is drawn with a few but powerful strokes. Al: :though he is only a minor character he is as completely depicted as Chevalier de Balibari.. Sir Charles is ~~the~~ an excellent repre: :sentative of the aristocratic tradition in the eighteenth century, typical of it both in his accomplishments and in his limitations. His urbanity and courtesy never desert him, his feelings are always concealed beneath a smiling mask. He is an amusing and witty companion, and his conversation is that of a man of culture and wide experience which makes him a shrewd commentator on the ways of men. In his easy, patronising manner towards Barry he shows the superiority of the aristocrat. But his sophisticated worldly manner is to some extent a defensive attitude, assumed to conceal from the world his sense of dis: :illusionment and the futility of his life. Sir Charles would have scorned to express his emotions, but his regrets that he has never had a virtuous attachment are not merely affected. They seem to point to a feeling of emotional disappointment, to the existence of unadmitted unhappiness. In many ways Sir Charles Lyndon resembles Lord Chesterfield in his old age. The latter who was however much more cultured, remained outwardly the very embodiment of the cynical, witty, sophisticated eighteenth-century aristocrat but his letters reveal a keen sense of the emptiness of his life. Some critics, however, have found a prototype of

Sir Charles Lyndon in Sir Charles Hanbury Williams, a great wit in a witty age, a diplomatist and man of the world, whose fate was hapless as Lyndon's own.

To conclude we may say that Barry Lyndon does not appear to have been a serious attempt to observe the usual conventions of historical fiction, such as the introduction of historical events and personages. There is nothing in it to compare with the chapters on Marlborough's campaigns in Esmond or the description of Brussels before Waterloo in Vanity Fair, (although events of these magnitude are, after all, exceptional in Thackeray.) Historical incidents are described very briefly or barely alluded to in passing, while real personages, such as Johnson, Goldsmith and Lord North are little more than mentioned.

In fact Thackeray seems to have been rather scornful of the usual method of historical novelists judging from the following passage. "These persons (I mean the romance-writers [1]) if they take a drummer or a dustman for a hero, somehow manage to bring him in contact with the greatest lords and most notorious person: :ages of the empire; and I warrant me there's not one of them but, in describing the battle of Minden, would manage to bring Prince Ferdinand, and My Lord George Sackville and My Lord Granly, into presence." [2]. Barry Lyndon is not an historical novel, then, in the sense that it presents history in a fictitious dressing or that it utilises historical events as material.

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1. He should have excepted Defoe. Perhaps Defoe's judgment in this respect weighed with him.

2. Barry Lyndon (Collier edition) p. 74

Indeed it is in a way less an historical novel than an attempt to resuscitate the picaresque variety of fiction and to adapt it to the taste of readers in Victorian days. It is historical only in the sense that Thackeray goes back to an earlier period in which novels in the picaresque tradition were still being written and sketches the manners of that time. But the historical context of Barry Lyndon, ~~that is its description of actual events~~ is no greater than that of Smollett's Roderick Random (1748). Its description of the social background is, however, more comprehensive, if less detailed on certain points. Smollett could assume knowledge on his readers' part of contemporary manners , whereas Thackeray was obliged to supply this information. Denis Duval, had it been completed, might also have had a considerable strain of the picaresque, but, as it is, Barry Lyndon remains unique among Thackeray's historical novels in its attempt to recreate the social life of a particular period in terms of a kind of fiction that was popular at that time.

Thackeray's historical novels are all more or less a compos: :ite picture fashioned out of material taken from the literature of the time, but the literary derivation is more marked in Barry Lyndon than in any of the others. Barry Lyndon is narrower in scope, however, than the other novels particularly in the char: :acterisation. Beatrix and Becky Sharp dominate Esmond and Vanity Fair respectively, but interest is not concentrated on either of them so strongly as on Barry Lyndon. Possibly this is because Barry narrates his own story. But the main purpose of Barry

Lyndon is different from that of the others. It is to show a rogue practising self-revelation, and however important the social background may be, this aim is kept steadily in view. Hence Barry Lyndon is in some respects not so characteristic of Thackeray as his other works. It is less expansive in method. Thackeray achieves his effects on a narrower canvas and with less detail than in Esmond, The Virginians, and Vanity Fair. It has more of the nature of a succession of pictures, than of a large land: :scape which the writer leisurely surveys and slowly unfolds for the benefit of the reader.

III

Vanity Fair which may be reckoned as Thackeray's second historical novel was written in 1846. He was undoubtedly dis: contented with his lot, and thought it high time to exert his powers in some serious bid for fame and fortune.[1] It was such thoughts that led him to write a novel on a scale so ambitious as Vanity Fair. But at first neither the publishers nor the public agreed with his "high opinion of that little production."[2] Colburn, in fact, refused it outright, even for his magazine.[3] "One has heard", says Lady Ritchie, "of the journeys which the manuscript made to various publishers' houses before it could find one ready to undertake the venture, and how long its appearance was delayed by various doubts and hesitations."[4] Meantime

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1. See his letter to Ayton on the second of January,1847.
2. Once in a rollicking mood he pointed out his house in Young Street to his friend James T. Fields, the Boston publisher,sayi "Down on your knees,you rogue, for here Vanity Fair was penned; and I will go down with you for I have a high opinion of that little production of myself"- Melville:Life of Thackeray P.195
3. See Melville's Life of Thackeray Vol. 1. P. 232.
4. Works with Biographical Introduction XXXVll.

the author was agonizing over a title and according to a curious story it was in the middle of the night that the title "came upon him unawares, as if a voice had whispered Vanity Fair"[1] He jumped out of bed and ran three times round the room repeating aloud "Vanity Fair, Vanity Fair, Vanity Fair!" "The title is such a good one," he afterwards said, "you couldn't have a better."[2] With this new title and after a cursory examination of the early chapters which were altered and revised with many erasures and with sentences rewritten in many different ways,[3] the story was at last accepted by Bradbury and Evan, the publishers of Punch. It began to appear in monthly parts in January 1847, and pursued its course up to July, 1848. Thackeray had not previously issued any novel in this form, or indeed in instalment form at all, his previous stories having appeared in magazines.

It is not very clear at what time the world began to be conscious that Vanity Fair was a novel of exceptional power and ability. The first numbers appear to have created no very great sensation. There was even for a while some talk of ceasing its issue. The fame of Dickens was already established. Dombey and Son was then appearing once a month in green paper covers and the yellow covered Vanity Fair did not seem to furnish a counter-attraction. At first only the more discriminating of the public recognised its merits. Mrs Carlyle, for instance, writes: "I brought away the last four numbers of Vanity Fair, and read one of them in bed during the night. Very good indeed, beats Dickens out of the world"[4]

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1. See Brookfield Letters: Appendix. The title owes its origin to those passages in Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, which describes how Christian and his companion passed through the "Fair" on their way to the Celestial City.
2. Works with Biographical Introduction XXXVIII.
3. It is curious to compare the early pages of Vanity Fair with those of Esmond which follow on directly without a single alteration.
4. Mrs Carlyle's letter to her husband Sept. 16 1847. See Marzials's Life of Thackeray (Great Writers series) p. 140.

Then suddenly a trivial circumstance - the appearance of his first Christmas book Mrs Perkin's Ball[1] aroused popular curiosity about Thackeray and all the world was talking of Vanity Fair. Soon after: :wards before the story was finished, an article calculated to excite public curiosity appeared in the Edinburgh Review,[2] saying " At this moment the rising generation are supplied with the best of their mental aliment by writers whose names are a dead letter to the mass, and among the most remarkable of these is Michael Angelo Titmarsh, alias William Makepeace Thackeray.[3] Then it gave a brief sketch of Thackeray's career and declared Vanity Fair immeasurably syperior to every other known production of his pen. "The great charm of this work is its entire freedom from mannerism and affectation both in style and sentiment - the confiding frankness with which the reader is addressed, - the thoroughbred carelessness with which the author permits the thoughts and feelings suggested by the situations to flow in their natural channel, as if conscious that nothing mean or unworthy, nothing requiring to be shaded, gilded, or dressed up in company attire, could fall from him. In a word, the book is the work of a gentleman, which is one great merit; and not the work of a fine (or would be fine) gentleman, which is another.[4] This review did stimulate public curiosity, and no doubt contributed to the novel's success. Before Vanity Fair was finished Thackeray had become a well known personage,and by the time that the publication of the monthly parts was concluded, he was recognised as a great novelist.

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1. A clever and amusing production of Thackeray's, in which the middle classes are satirised for venturing to give parties without the means and appliances of wealth.
2. The reviewer was Hayward, the noted social talker, and a friend of Thackeray.
3. See Edinburgh Review Jan. 1848 P. 49.
4. Ibid P. 50.

It is not so easy to isolate the historical aspects in Vanity Fair[1] as it is in Esmond or in the Virginians where we have them inserted en bloc, in the campaigning chapters of the former or in the descrip: :tions of the attack on Fort Duquesne and the course of American War of Independence in the latter. We do not even make such brief con: :tact with historical events and personages, as we do in Barry Lyndon, where the hero serves in the seven years' War and meets Lord North, Johnson, Goldsmith and others. Thackeray gives neither a description of the famous ball on the eve of Waterloo nor any of the actual fight: :ing in that battle, the greatest historical event in his period. We remain in the city and witness the agitation of the women, instead of marching out with Rawdon Crawley, Osborne and Dobbin to the field of battle. The rumbling of cannon is heard in the distance, and a wounded ensign is carried into the city, but that is as near as we get to the actual conflict. Yet though Thackeray takes oblique glances at historical events and though his characters are not shown as central actors in them, the course of the story and the fortunes of the characters are materially affected by those events. "Our sur: :prised story now finds itself for a moment among very famous events and personages and hanging on to the skirts of history."[2] says Thackeray at one point and this remark admirably indicates the extent to which he witnesses history in Vanity Fair, and for the most part in his other historical novels. He hangs on to "the skirts of history" instead of bringing it boldly into the centre of the picture. Yet the escape of Napoleon from Elba alarmed all Europe. "The funds fell, and old John ~~Saddler~~ Sedley was ruined."[3] This is an ingenious way of linking history and fiction. But all the same it is a mere thread. Before Waterloo was over George Osborne lay dead with a

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1. See Appendix B : I for soureés. P.400
2. Vanity Fair (Collier edition) p. 207.
3. Vanity Fair Part I p. 210.

bullet in his heart and a new chapter began in the life of the widowed Amelia. Apart from this critical juncture it cannot be said that historical affairs play a great part in Vanity Fair. Its business, like that of the larger world goes on in its humdrum, everyday fashion, until it is jolted out of its lethargy by some cataclysmic event, like the battle of Waterloo. As a rule matters went on in the Sedley household "just as if matters in Europe were not in the least disorgan: :ised. The retreat from Leipsic made no difference to the number of meals Mr Sambo took in the servant's hall; the Allies poured into France, and the dinner bell rang at five o'clock just as usual. I dont think poor Amelia cared anything about Brienne and Montmirail, or was fairly interested in the war until the abdication of the Emperor; when she clapped her hands and said prayers,....The fact is peace was declared, Europe was going to be at rest; the Corsican was overthrown, and Lieutenant Osborne's regiment would not be ordered on service."[1]

But though the historical background against which the comedy of Vanity Fair is played out is sketched in very lightly, the manners and outlook of society are illustrated more fully than in any other of Thackeray's historical novels. This is because he was coming to a time he knew himself. Vanity Fair also describes Society more fully than Esmond and the Virginians, because it deals with the life of merchants and stockbrokers as well as with the landed gentry, Military men, and the aristocracy, or than Denis Duval, because it includes peers and peeresses as well as burgeois' characters. Again its social range is wider than Barry Lyndon, because it is not concerned almost exclusively with men of the world and ladies of fashion or doubtful reputation. Barry Lyndon gives a very narrow view of society and even those characters who do appear in it are seen only from one angle. In Vanity Fair

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1. Vanity Fair Part I. P. 135.

we pass from the stuffy atmosphere of an Academy for young ladies to the house of a wealthy stockbroker and a tallow merchant, both of which are ponderously and respectably, dull and conventional, to the household of a miserly baronet, to a country Rectory, to the home of a couple of adventurers who live on nothing a year, and to the splendid rooms of Lord Steyne's stately residence, Gaunt House. Occasionally we get a glimpse of the servants' hall, and sometimes the author introduces us to a regimental mess. Obviously Thackeray's picture of the social scene, as far as the upper middle class is con: :cerned, is comprehensive enough.

The seamy side of society is not so strongly displayed in Vanity Fair as in Barry Lyndon ; Rawdon Crawley has fought a duel,but he is not so much addicted to this means of settling a quarrel as Barry Lyndon; gambling is still indulged in freely by Rawdon and kindred spirits, but it again has not so prominent a place as in Barry Lyndon. Neither do the potations of the characters equal those of the redoubt: :able Barry. Dancing, riding in the Ring at ~~Hdye~~ Hyde Park, the craze for acting charades which had newly come from France, and such pleasures make up the round of Society life. But Thackeray openly asserts that he is prohibited by current conventions from describing the activities of man of the world as fully as he would have liked to do. "The times are such that one scarcely dares to allude to that kind of com: :pany which thousands of our young men in Vanity Fair are frequenting everyday, which nightly fills casinos and dancing-rooms, which is known to exist as well as the Ring in Hyde Park or the Congregation at St James's - but which the most squeamish if not the most moral of societies is determined to ignore."[1]

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1. Vanity Fair Part II Chap. XIV. P. 166.

Though Vanity Fair is written in the third person and though the writer appears as the omniscient novelist and not as the editor of memoirs, as in Barry Lyndon, Esmond and Denis Duval, it does not differ essentially in method and form from those other novels, though it is slightly more generalised, that is, the interest depends less on specific episodes. It has the same looseness, the same leisurely dwelling on scenes and manners interesting in themselves but not indispensable to the main story that characterises the other works which are avowedly couched in the memoir form. Narrative and descrip: :tion are much more common than dialogue. Thackeray does keep up the pretence that the whole story was related to him by a military friend of Rawdon Crawley's and he very seldom allows the characters to appear in their own persons in dramatic fashion. In his other historical novels the characters get rather more opportunities of appearing in their own persons. He is always manipulating them in Vanity Fair like puppets, commenting on their actions and motives and interpolating passages of general reflections or moralisings. The result is that the novel has scarcely a semblance of unity and what form it possesses is chiefly derived from the fact that chronological order is observed, though by no means rigidly in the narrative.

It has been pointed out that there are two plots in Vanity Fair, the one concerned with the fortunes of Amelia and the other with the experiences of Becky Sharp. There is not much connection between the two plots beyond the fact that Becky Sharp and Amelia had been friends at School and cross each other's path later on a few other occasions. By itself each plot might have provided a theme for a conventional novel, although there is scarcely enough body in the experiences of Amelia to make a plot of substantial dimensions without padding it out with

descriptions of the social background. Amelia's innocent adoration of the conceited, pleasure-loving George Osborne, her sudden bereave: :ment by violent means, her resignation to changed circumstances, and her final yielding to the constant and unselfish attachment of Dobbin seem to parallel, with a few differences, the experiences of Lady Castlewood. In the other part of the plot which revolves round the person of Becky we have a parallel to the adventures of Barry Lyndon. Mutatis Mutandis the career of Becky the female adventurer bears con: :siderable resemblance to that of her male counterpart.

That is, in Vanity Fair we have combined two plots ~~that~~ which stand in striking contract to each other, both in the dispositions of the characters that appear in each and in the nature of the incidents. It is as if good and bad or black and white were placed in juxtaposition. The Amelia part is a rather sentimental and commonplace narrative, whereas the part Becky dominates is satirical, brilliant and illustrates much better Thackeray's genius for delineation of character and de: :scription of manners. Certainly the household in Curzon Street which exists solely on credit is a more interesting place than the quiet, little retreat of the bankrupt Sedleys. Becky's adventures might have stood by themselves; there is enough in them to provide the material for a novel. But by combining these two strands, complicating the experiences of Becky by relating her to the numerous members of Crawley family and by describing in full the personages and habits of the different social circles, Thackeray achieves a greater breadth and a more crowded presentment of society than he did in Barry Lyndon or Esmond or the Virginians. His primary purpose was not to construct an ingenious and effective plot - very seldom does anything unexpected occur in the course of the story - but to crowd the stage with as many

representative characters as were necessary to convey an impression of the manifold activities of "Vanity Fair". A certain confusion or irregularity was almost necessary to secure his effort hence he seems to denote no more attention to the plot than was necessary to secure this purpose. Had Thackeray been greatly concerned with the development of the plot he would not have allowed the story to drag on as it does towards the end. The natural ending of the story was the appointment of Rawdon to his Governorship, with perhaps a brief glance at the fate of Amelia, but as it is the story wanders on long past the resolution.

Thackeray's method is the reverse of dramatic, and only at critical moments does he clear the stage and allow the characters to take matters into their own hands. Yet it is curious that in his remarks on the story and the characters Thackeray constantly employs dramatic language, even if it is that of the producer of the puppet show. It is significant that he should talk in this strain, for it reveals a strong proprietary interest in his characters. They are to him, it seems, puppets he has carved out, extraordinarily like real people, speaking and behaving intelligently but still controlled by the hand of their creator, though in a less rigid way than Thomas Hardy does with his characters. In the case of some novelists the characters seem to grow in stature, until they attain an independent life of their own, and the Author acts, as it were, as their inter: :preter. But Thackeray never seems to become absorbed in the characters of Vanity Fair and to forget for any length of time that they are puppets whom he has to set in activity. He regards them at times, moreover, in a detached manner, criticises them, and anticipates the criticisms of the reader, as, withess his discussion

of the character of Amelia: "All of which details, I have no doubt JONES, who reads this book at his Club, will pronounce to be ex: :cessively foolish, trivial, twaddling, and ultra- sentimental."[1]

The complexity and variety of the characters constitutes perhaps the most remarkable feature in Vanity Fair. In a letter to his mother Thackeray stated plainly the idea which he wished to embody in the novel. "What I want is to make a set of people living without God in the world (only that is a cant phrase), greedy, pompous men, perfectly self-satisfied for the most part, and at least about their superior virtue."[2] Hence the stage of Vanity Fair is crowded with scoundrels, rakes, adventurers, cheats and cowards. The weak suffer and the good are outwitted by the bad. And this, Thackeray considers, is a just picture of the "Vanity Fair", whose evils we are advised to shun. It may be argued that he has lavished too much of his creative powers on the vicious characters at the expense of the few good but weak ones, who are colourless and uninteresting by comparison. The former have been created with more zest; in every way, in intellect and variety of talents, their creator has endowed them more generously than the characters of a different type.

But this criticism is rather beside the point for Vanity Fair is a satire as well as a novel. Naturally then it is largely con: :cerned with vices and follies which become the butt of the satirist. In the works of any satirist, such as Juvenal, Horace, Voltaire, Dryden, Pope and Swift most of the characters depicted are the embodiments of

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1. Vanity Fair Part I p. 6
2. Works with Biographical Introduction XXXVI.

one or more vices. From its very nature, satire is bound to be one-sided, devoting less attention to ideals than to follies and vices. All the same it is indirectly on the side of ideals which are implied if not stated, by its censure of those who are unprincipled. Hence the apparent preponderance of evil in Vanity Fair. Thackeray is closer to Horace in temper than to any other satirist. Both writers were urbane and cultured, living in upper class society in two great centres of civilisation. Thackeray's satire is generally gentle and kindly in tone like that of Horace. Even at its most indignant or contemptuous Thackeray relieves his satire with wit and humour, and in general he directs his satiric observations at the foibles rather than at the viciousness of men.

The families which compose so much of the characterisation of Vanity Fair are clearly distinguished from one another, and within each family the various members also reveal contrasting individualities. The Osbornes are a hard breed. The father is a proud and heartless plutocrat, but his son, George, has more generous impulses which have been restricted by a formal education. The British Merchant is, indeed, a trifle conventional; but the young soldier, who would be a gentleman and has the expensive tastes of one, is assuredly one of the best, (or worst) cads in fiction.

In the Sedley family the father is well-meaning but incompetent. Mrs Sedley is matronly and kind, but rather colourless, a description which also applies, though not so much, to the gentle Amelia. Very different from them is Jos. Sedley, pampered, easy and selfish. A large portion of the book is devoted to Amelia, but though she is not altogether colourless, she is too spiritless to claim any special attention. Whether Thackeray has ill-treated her or not is rather difficult to say. ~~But he is somewhat changeable in his attitude~~

~~to her.~~ Generally he attributes to her angelic perfection and with the utmost pathos describes her troubles. But does not Amelia dis: :play on more than one occasion lamentable weakness of character? She is childish in prosperity and becomes petted and wilful in adversity. She is passionately devoted to her unfaithful husband who half despises her and after his death she cherishes a romantic attachment to his memory. No good intentions can conceal the fact that she has no strong intellect. Again and again in her passages with Dobbin, where one would have expected even from the most long suffering a show of righteous anger, or an outburst of wronged and passionate love, we find only sobs, protestations, and sentimental reflections. When Mrs Liddell begged him to allow Dobbin to win her as his bride, he replied, "Well, he shall, and when he has got her, he will not find her worth having."[1.] The character of Amelia, according to Thackeray, was sketched partly from his mother, partly from his wife, and partly from his friend, Mrs Brookfield.[2] But Mrs Brookfield was certainly not stupid; nor presumably were Thackeray's mother and his wife. Nevertheless, Thackeray's purpose in delineating the character of Amelia was obviously two-fold; he introduced her first as an example of the negative virtues, and afterwards continued the study of her disposition as a contrast to that of Becky.

But Thackeray is at his best with the Crawleys. A more re: :pulsive, detestable family than the Crawleys can hardly be imagined and has rarely been described. They provide an element of a gro: :tesque but really ugly kind of comedy. No sooner does old Sir Pitt

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1. Dean Liddell's Life P. 8
2. Works with Biographical Introduction. XXX

shoulder Becky's trunks than we know what he is - a sharp, miserly, vulgar man of good family, who has all the taste of low life. Though supposed to live in the nineteenth century he bears some resemblance to Lord Macaulay's sketch of an English squire in the seventeenth. It has been said that Lord Rolle of Stevenstone was the original of Sir Pitt Crawley, but nothing seems to be known definitely. As a matter of fact the differences between Sir Pitt and Lord Rolle of Stevenstone are more striking than their resemblances. The latter is reputed to have been "an active country magistrate, a good landlord and a liberal benefactor to the Church," [1] - rather a more flattering portrait than Thackeray paints of Sir Pitt Crawley. Perhaps Lord Rolle was the prototype of Sir Pitt mainly in the course texture of his intellect. He held plain common-sense views and spoke too frequently to be successful as a Debater in Parliament. Even in Thackeray's own day Sir Pitt must have appeared an exaggeration, but it is possible that the element of exaggeration is that which usually appears in the case of butts. It is handy to have a character whose eccentricities become a target for the author's wit when the story is in need of some comic relief and Sir Pitt serves this purpose excellently. His boorish ignorance and vulgar manners fit him for the role of the clown, whose function is to relieve the seriousness of the play.

If Sir Pitt is a good example of a miserly country squire, the Rev. Bute Crawley is not a very prepossessing specimen of the country parson type. In his coarse tastes and fondness for sport he resembles an eighteenth century hunting parson. But he has none of the generosity and kindness that sometimes accompanied the sporting tastes

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1. Dictionary of National Biography XLIX. 164.

of eighteenth century clergymen. His cheerfulness and confidence proceed from his physical fitness and of moral worth he shows singularly few signs. In spite of his meanness and selfishness he is constantly in financial difficulties. The dislike of the Rev. Bute and Sir Pitt for one another is paralleled by the strained relat: :ions between Rawdon and his brother, neither of whom is so sordid or repellent as his father.

Miss Crawley is a worldly, humorous, irreligious, old maid, an admirable specimen of the selfish worldling whose egoism is developed by wealth. Perhaps she is even more selfish and self-indulgent than Madame de Bernstein, as Beatrix of Esmond becomes in The Virginians, but hardly more self willed and capricious. However she has less strength of character and in times of illness is easily dominated by her scheming relatives. Her chief resemblance to Mme. de Bernstein lies in her thorough-going worldliness.

Perhaps the only character who attracts sympathy in this re: :pulsive family is the debauched dragoon, Rawdon Crawley. He is a celebrated "blood" or dandy, fond of boxing, duelling and gambling. The only person who dominates Rawdon is his wife, Becky, whose power over him depends on his trusting and childlike devotion. His faith in her love is unquestioning until she gradually withdraws from him and leaves him to lavish his devotion on his son. Nor does he recognise the full extent of Becky's deceitfulness until he is taken to the sponging-house, and at this painful moment Rawdon bears himself with the dignity and courage of a gentleman. Many writers during the last century have tried to present a portrait of a dandy, but if Rawdon Crawley is compared with Sir Mulberry Hawk or any of the

"bloods" of Bulwer Lytton, his greater manliness and credibility become evident.

With the same ease Thackeray presents his other characters, ~~besides the above-mentioned families.~~ Lord Steyne is the only specimen of the upper ranks of the aristocracy drawn into the bustle of Vanity Fair. He is a man of some polish and apparent refinement, but none of his great social or educational advantages make him, in reality, a better man than Sir Pitt Crawley. Though not so coarse as old Sir Pitt, Steyne is really the more hardened and the more dangerous of the two. He is perhaps the most inveterately wicked man in the whole book. Judged by artistic standards, however, he shows Thackeray's powers at their best. He is a brilliant example of the man of the world, the titledpro: :fligate, the cold, calculating egoist, whose sensualism is conbined with an acute intellect, and whose self sufficiency and contempt for moral restrictions reaches a level of sublimity. He is a character whose very excesses serve but to increase the impression of verisimilitude, instead of conveying the opposite effect of exaggeration. There is almost a satanic energy discernable in his character, a power that refuses to be curbed, a strong will, and passions, that have been gratified with impunity. The char: :acter of Lord Steyne is plainly sketched from the notorious third[1] Marquis of Hertford, Francis Charles Seymore Conway, who also served as the model for Lord Monmouth in Disraeli's Coningsby (1844). Lord Hertford was a profligate, but he was no more dissolute than some other dandies of the Regency period and his excesses were partly the result of a streak of insanity that ran in his family. Thackeray

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1. See Dictionary of National Biography article "Seymour" also Croker Paper 1. 236.

makes Lord Steyne much more of a monster than his prototype, and even more so than Disraeli's Lord Monmouth. Monmouth is drawn as a luxurious, indulgent, extravagant and domineering libertine, but he is not so exacting, so coldly brutal and repellent as Steyne. ~~Heartless as Monmouth is he at least preserves a show of good nature.~~ Owing to the part he had to play in Vanity Fair it was necessary however to endow Steyne in some degree with the qualities of a monster. Had he been represented merely as a patron of art and a polished man of the world, like Disraeli's Monmouth, he could not have been made the slave of passion. Both characters are drawn on differnet lines for they have different roles to play.

Another great character, though somewhat stagey in con: :ception, is the lumbering, sound-hearted Dobbin, whose suppressed love for Amelia, whose ungainly manners and downright good sense always appeal to readers. His original, a brave and good man, but not a soldier was Archdeacon Allen, one of Thackeray's oldest and dearest friends. As Leslie Stephen has written: "Anyone who knew the Archdeacon and has studied Vanity Fair will recognise his portrait, Mutatis mutandis, in the simple-minded chivalrous Major Dobbin."[1.] Another cleric, this time a fictitious one, may have been a prototype of Dobbin. Parson Adams in Fieldings Joseph Andrews (1742) is physically as well endowed for soldiering as Dobbin, and in simplicity of nature, utter unselfishness, awkward: :ness of manner and an astonishing naiveté they are akin. All the same a learned, unworldly clergyman is a more credible character

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1. Op. cit. Works with Biographical Introduction XXX.

than an officer with the simple trust and generous outlook of a schoolboy. At times, indeed, Dobbin appears unduly and irri: :tatingly simple, but he generally redeems himself by his good natured awkwardness, or by a touch of willing self-sacrifice. His constant nobleness is well contrasted with Osborne's conceited selfishness throughout.

The marvellous creation of Becky Sharp is by universal con: :sent the great triumph of the book. Though Thackeray never confessed that a model sat for his heroine, she was, according to Lady Ritchie, a "dazzling little lady dressed in black," who called on Thackeray one morning and "greeted him with great affection and brilliancy, and who, departing presently, gave him a large bundle of fresh violets."[1] For a time a ridiculous story which made Becky a representation of Charlotte Brontë had some currency, and it was alleged that in the character of Rochester in Jane Eyre (1847) Charlotte Brontë revenged herself by presenting Thackeray in an unattractive guise. Whether Becky has her prototype or not, her creator is aware that she can scarcely be regarded as a normal specimen of womanhood, and her departure from normality is accounted for on grounds of heredity. From her father, a drunken artist, she inherited such qualities as her intellectual brilliance, her artistic delight in colour, variety, enjoyment, and entertainment. From her mother, a French opera-girl, Becky acquired her histrionic capacity, and her lively, vivacious manner. The poverty of her home life re-inforced her innate tendency to think only of herself and to cherish ambitions of luxury and enjoyment. Her environment

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1. Works with Biographical Introduction . XXX

stimulated precocity, worldliness, and cynicism, so that at Miss Pinkerton's she finds herself as far in advance of the other girls intellectually as she is beneath them morally.

Becky starts on her career with nothing but her own brains, courage, self reliance and pretty looks to help her. She is animated through life by extra-ordinary singleness of purpose - her own social advancement. To this end she makes use of every one that crosses her path, and always adapts herself to her surroundings. In her father's sordid lodgings at Queen's Crawley, at Brighton, at Brussels, in Mayfair, at Gaunt House, at Pumpernickel and at Bath, she always plays the role expected of her. And in all circumstances Becky is absolutely true to herself with her cleverness, her selfishness, her boldness, her commonsense and her cool alertness. She even shows a sense of justice when her own interests are not concerned. For instance towards the close of the story she brings Amelia and Dobbin together by showing the love letter George Osborne had written to her on the eve of Waterloo. Though this was prompted more by her irritation at Amelia's abtuseness than by any desire to give the patient Dobbin the reward of his long devotion, yet it was after all an act from which no personal advantage was to be gained.

But Thackeray's treatment of Becky is curiously different from his treatment of Barry Lyndon, her male counterpart. For that rascal Thackeray shows a tolerance which amounts to liking, and this in spite of the fact that Barry, unlike Becky, was under no temptation to become a scheming, selfish rogue. Becky might have remained a governess all her days, had she not used her wits unscrupulously, but apparantly Thackeray cannot see the force of the

temptation to which she was exposed.

Becky is far greater and much more individual than Amelia. The latter leads a simple sheltered life, whereas Becky courageously makes her own way in the world. Chiefly as a result of their different upbringing, they react differently to misfortune. Amelia's gentleness turns to irritability, whereas Becky forces social disaster with courage and resourcefulness.

If we follow the two plots in Vanity Fair and compare the scenes on both sides, we shall see that except Dobbin's fight at school and George's death in the battlefield it requires effort of memory to recall the other scenes in which Amelia is concerned, such as the ruin of old Sedley and despair of Amelia herself, Osborne revoking his will and Sedley broken down, the birth and boyhood of George Osborne, and the end of old Sedley and of old Osborne, etc., etc.; because they do not haunt the memory, although they are pathetically and charmingly told. But as soon as we turn towards the other side, a number of famous scenes of memorable beauty and dramatic intensity, all in connection with Becky, powerfully flash upon our mind - the flinging of the "Dixionary"[1] out of the carriage window; her initial experiment with Jos. Sedley, especially the Chili scene; the courting of Sir Pitt; the ball at Brussels, where she insults Amelia, while she captures the heart of Amelia's husband; the evening of those charades at Gaunt House; and the most famous scene of all, when Rawdon Crawley is released from the sponging house and finds Lord Steyne with Becky alone.

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1. We do not know why Trollope objected to Becky's return of the "Dixionary" as unnatural. Of course she would not have done it later; but as she was then it is one of the most evitable touches in fiction.

This scene is unquestionably one of the most powerful and dramatic in Thackeray's novels. All the characters who take part in it are persons drawn with life-like force, displaying powerful passions and transformed by anger. Their words are few, but quivering with emotion; the sentences which are spoken contain an infinite amount of concentrated feeling. "I am innocent" said she, - "make way, let me pass," cried My Lord, - "you lie, you coward and villain!" cried Rawdon.[1] The dandy is transformed into a man of courage, and a touch of exceptionally fine insight on Thackeray's part is shown by Becky's outburst of admiration at her husband's revenge. It is said that when Thackeray wrote this scene, he exclaimed, "By Jove! that's genius." His exclamation was justified.

If Esmond is considered by most critics as Thackeray's best historical novel, there is an equal measure of agreement that Vanity Fair is his best novel. It does not dispute priority of place with Esmond as an historical novel, because it has not often been regarded as such. Yet, if we grant that it belongs to historical fiction, since in it Thackeray is looking backwards over a panorama of social life as much as he is in Barry Lyndon, Esmond, The Virginians, or Denis Duval, it might be argued with some plausibility that it illustrates his method of writing historical fiction in its purest form. Historical personages which in the other novels do little more than date the period do not figure in Vanity Fair. Historical incidents are reduced to a minimum; one is

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1. See Vanity Fair Part II P. 223.

conscious that off stage events are taking place that influence the fortunes, but this is suggested skilfully without any elab: :orate insertion of descriptions imperfectly assimilated with the rest of the story. The social background, because it was nearer to Thackeray's own time, is broader and more fully describ: :ed than in the novels set in the eighteenth century, where he was obliged to use more generalised methods. It has been aptly described by Dr. Ernest A. Baker as "a great anatomy of society".[1] Consequently one may say that in Vanity Fair Thackeray purged historical fiction of elements he used generally in a half-hearted fashion in his other novels and allowed himself to expand as fully as possible that element of social life which interested him most. Judged by standards which are usually applied to historical novels Esmond may quite justly be reckoned as greater in that kind than Vanity Fair, but all the same the latter has greater historic interest for modern readers on account of its comprehensive record of the activities and amusements of the upper middle, and to some extent of the aristocratic, class at the be: :ginning of the nineteenth century. [If its historical character may be disputed, it is incontestably one of the greatest novels of contemporary social history ever written.]

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1. The History of the English Novel : The Age of Dickens and Thackeray (London, 1936) P. 357.

IV.

Henry Esmond[1] is Thackeray's third and best known historical novel. It may be that the outline of the story had come to him when he was finishing Pendennis[2], and wrote : "I've got a better subject for a novel than any I've yet had."[3] A little later he said, "A story is biling up in my interior, in which there shall appear some very good, lofty and generous people"[4]. According to Elwin, this resolve to write a novel including such characters was inspired by a remark of Arthur Helps in Elliot's drawing-room. Speaking of Thackeray Helps said: "Is he an admirable man?" adding, "I want to know, for his books don't give me the impression that he is." Thackeray, entering the room at that moment, overheard the remark. Mrs. Brookfield therefore informed him that "I should like you to write a novel to startle Helps and such like objectors who think your heart does not keep pace with your head."[4] As Thackeray told her that he had "got a very amusing book, the Tatler Newspaper of 1709," it is evident that he was already forming the plan of Esmond[5].

The story was written during 1851 and the early part of 1852. The historical setting seems sometimes to have tired

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1. Its full title is The History of Henry Esmond Esquire, a Colonel in the service of Queen Anne, written by himself; its half title runs: Esmond, a Story of Queen Anne's Reign.
2. Pendennis succeeded Vanity Fair and came to an end in Dec., 1850.
3. Malcolm Elwin: Thackeray (London, 1932) P. 257.
4. Ibid. quoted from a letter Thackeray wrote to Mrs. Brookfield.
5. See Thackeray by Malcolm Elwin, P. 258.

Thackeray. He declared that his novel took almost as much trouble to write as Macauley's History[1]. While he was working, reading for and writing his new story, he was also going from place to place lecturing. But to be true to history he had to follow up this thread, or look up that point, find a name here, or an occurrence there. Hence the book was written in circumstances scarcely conducive, one would think, to success in so delicate a piece of work; for it was penned partly at the author's club, partly while travelling about the country on his lecturing tour, partly during brief visits to the country and partly in the British Museum[2]. Little wonder that his chronological references are sometimes loose and at times even contradictory.

He felt that the work had its heavy side, was at times rather serious and sombre and that parts were written in too low a key. His attitude to the work changed according to his mood. Sometimes he expressed dissatisfaction with the result of his labours, and at others he seemed pleased with its progress. At one time he pronounced it "dull and tiresome"[3]; yet in the same

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1. See Works with Biographical Introduction, xxi.
2. This fact is recorded by Eyre Crowe (amanuensis to Thackeray), who used to go to the British Museum to look up historical details. As the search extended Thackeray accompanied the secretary and worked with him in an unfrequented gallery where dictation (the first part was written by the author and the rest dictated) went on among the books of reference.
3. Lewis Melville: Life of Thackeray i. 292.

breath he declared it was "well written,"[1] and was proud of the pains he had expended on it. "You'll find it dull," he said, "but it is founded on family papers."[2]

Esmond was published in the Autumn of 1852. It is worth noting that it was the only book of which Thackeray wrote the last page before he had its first page printed. In other words, it was given to the world not in parts but in three complete volumes. "I have given up," Thackeray wrote, "and only had for a day or two, the notion for the book in numbers; it is much too grave and sad for that."[3] It was perhaps on account of this that the work acquired a unity of form and artistic development rare in Thackeray's productions. "His only work," says Trollope, "... in which there is no touch of idleness, is Esmond. Barry Lyndon is consecutive, and has the well-sustained purpose of exhibiting a finished rascal; but Barry Lyndon is not quite the same from beginning to end. All his full-fledged novels, except Esmond, contain rather strings of incidents and memoirs of individuals than a completed story. But Esmond is a whole from beginning to end, with its tale well told, its purpose developed, its moral brought home, - and its nail hit well on the head and driven in"[4].

It is interesting to notice, however, that some contemporary readers and critics did not appreciate the value of this book.

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1. Lewis Melville: Life of Thackeray i. 292.
2. Ibid.
3. Works with Biographical Introduction xvii.
4. Thackeray (English Men of Letters) P.124.

George Eliot, for instance, condemned it as a most uncomfortable book, and Miss Mitford thought it unpleasant and painful. But Charlotte Brontè regarded the story with mixed feelings, declaring on reading the first volume in manuscript that it was at once "admirable and Odious"; yet she had the discernment to see that "if the continuance be an improvement upon the commencement, if the stream gathers force as it rolls, Thackeray will triumph,"[1] and she later found reason to acknowledge that he had triumphed. Whatever the critics thought of it, Thackeray knew what he had done. "Here is the very best I can do," he said, "I stand by this book, and am willing to leave it, wherever I go, as my card."[2]

It is generally alleged that Esmond[3] is Thackeray's masterpiece in the region of the historical novel, because his mind accommodated itself perfectly to the eighteenth-century environment, and because he was more at ease in the coffee-houses of the London of Queen Anne's day than he was in the stuffy surroundings of Victorianism. Without doubt the eighteenth century appealed enormously to Thackeray, and his acquaintance with the works of the Augustan writers was extensive and appreciative. More than any writer of his time he knew and admired eighteenth century literature; he was interested like writers of that time in social matters rather than in abstract ideas and his satirical propensity reveals obvious affinities with them.

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1. See Life of Thackeray (Great Writers Series) P.176.
2. J.F. Fields: Yesterday with Authors, op. cit., Melville's Life of Thackeray i. 293.
3. For its sources see Appendix B: II. P400

But it is doubtful whether one can press the resemblance between Thackeray and the early eighteenth-century writers too far. The romantic movement had intervened, leaving its marks even on writers who show little of its more striking characteristics. It sharpened the sensibilities of writers and made sentiment, and frequently sentimentalism, more current. Now Thackeray shows a marked tendency to sentimentalism that one will not find in any of the early eighteenth century writers, except possibly in the plays and essays of Steele. One scarcely thinks that Addison or Swift, if they had created a character like Lady Castlewood, would have lingered over her with such sentimental tenderness as Thackeray does.

There are two strands in the historical background of Esmond, which are more or less separate, namely, the question of the rightful succession to the throne of England and the wars against the French in which Marlborough won his great victories. The former is closely connected with the fortunes of the house of Castlewood, the latter owes its inclusion simply to the fact that the hero took part in Marlborough's campaigns. Esmond's point of view is that of the disillusioned Jacobite, whose inherited attachment to the Stuart dynasty weakens with the recognition of the worthlessness of its representatives. Loyalty to the Stuarts was traditional in the Castlewood family; an ancestor suffered in person and property for his devotion to the cause of the King in the Civil War and Castlewood itself, like many English mansions had been attacked by Roundhead forces. As a boy of twelve Esmond hears of the arrival of the usurping Prince of Orange and for some years afterwards he lives in the

midst of constant plotting for the restoration of the exiled King and Catholicism.

Thackeray's view of Jacobites and Jesuits was too much coloured by traditional Protestant and Whig reading of history to be strictly in accordance with reality. But it may be admitted that a romantic attitude towards Jacobitism and Catholicism had its advantages for the novelist, as an element of intrigue seldom comes amiss in an historical novel. This Jacobite element, which is pseudo-historical rather than historical, in that it is true to the spirit, if not to the letter of history, pervades the whole novel, whereas the strictly historical incidents, such as Blenheim and the other battles, are not blended so closely with the main theme. After the interpolation of Marlborough's campaigns, which some critics regard as a dead-weight of historical matter, but which is not unduly elaborated, although they contribute little (beyond the fact that in the course of his service in them Esmond learned the secret of his birth) to the main action of the novel, the thread of Jacobite intrigue is picked up again. And this time also Jacobitism is described in a semi-fictitious manner, for the plot to carry out a coup d'état on the death of Queen Anne by means of the production of the Old Pretender has not historical warrant, although the air was thick with talk of schemes for restoring the banished line. It is interesting to note how Thackeray takes liberties with Jacobitism as other historical novelists do, but adheres more closely to fact in his accounts of Marlborough's campaigns. ~~Certainly his portrait of the Duke which has inhuman or superhuman traits of both wickedness and~~

genius may be disputed, but here the writer makes it clear that he is representing Marlborough as he appeared to one who disliked his political principles, or lack of principles, and was also biassed in favour of General Webb. Marlborough's neglect of the latter would naturally be resented by a supposed descendant like Esmond and a real descendant like Thackeray.

In his dedication the author informs us that he "copies the manners and language of Queen Anne's reign."[1] Queen Anne society with its fashions and indulgences is well described, though it was by no means all bad. Thackeray tends a little to make too much of the low living or what have been called the alcoholic virtues. Esmond does not plunge heartily into the social vortex, but is dragged into it by the other characters. He becomes involved in a duel, then the recognised method of settling differences between men of honour, through his desire to stand by Lord Castlewood. The gambling which brought Lord Castlewood to his death was also a favourite indulgence with gentlemen and was practised in the shape of lotteries by all classes. Cards in a more innocent form were one of the fashionable pursuits of the ladies, some of whom, like the Dowager Lady Castlewood, no doubt spent as much as six hours a day at this diversion. The balls, the parties, the ostentatious extravagance of dress and furnishing which were freely indulged in by society people are illustrated by the career and ambitions of Beatrix who desired to shine in this splendid aristocratic

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1. See Thackeray's letter to William Bingham Oct. 18, 1852, printed on the dedicatory page of Esmond.

circle. Besides conveying a full impression of the round of London society Esmond in those chapters which deal with the family's residence at Castlewood shows how an eighteenth-century country gentleman lived on his estate, with his large staff of servants, his horses and carriages, respected by the villagers and treated with deference by the local parson. All this social background is largely recreated from the literature of the time, which fortunately for Thackeray's purposes was largely preoccupied with the manners and morals of society. Indeed it is doubtful if the historical novelist who sets his scene in any earlier or even later, period has so much material of the precise kind that is needed to paint a full and convincing picture of the society of the time.

Apart from Thackeray's natural desire to introduce characters, like Addison, Steele and Swift with whose writings he was intimately acquainted, their inclusion was necessary to complete the scene, for in the days of Queen Anne men of letters were courted by the politicians[1] and patronised by the aristocracy. Swift was one of the most influential men of the time; Addison became a Secretary of State. They all had friends among the aristocracy. Hence Esmond would have been incomplete without the appearance of contemporary writers. Esmond himself as a man of culture naturally attends the theatre and seeks the acquaintance of the men of letters, and contributes an essay to the Spectator which is an imitation of Addison's in its ironic

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1. In Esmond Addison is visited by Mr. Boyle with a message from "my Lord Treasurer and my Lord Halifax." - See Esmond (Collier edition) P.291.

glances at the fair sex.

This essay shows that Thackeray has caught the peculiar classic flavour of Queen Anne's English and writes, if not quite like Addison and Steele, at least like one of their friends and contemporaries. It is a pastiche, but a pastiche which required for its execution a consummate command of all the subtleties and delicate nuances of style. Indeed in many places the style is imitated so closely that sometimes we almost suspect that perhaps the words are copied as well. We feel as we do when reading Milton's Latin poems or Swinburne's French sonnets, that it is a surprising imitation of the original. It must be understood, however, that when Thackeray tries to imitate the writers of the Augustan Age, he does not try to reproduce what is archaic, but rather to approach to the permanent standard of the language; and that his imitation is successful just because it came natural to him not to follow the affectations of a peculiar period, but to discard the mannerisms of his own, and to write English, as it was written by Swift, Steele, Addison and Fielding, with perfect ease, simplicity and propriety.

Esmond is ostensibly the memoirs of Colonel Esmond written in his old age in his Virginian home. By adopting this form which he uses also in Barry Lyndon and Denis Duval, Thackeray made a certain looseness of structure seem quite natural, for one does not expect a compact plot in memoirs. The lack of a closely constructed plot is frequently found in autobiographical novels, especially if they cover a long period of time. Memoirs usually consist of narration, description and comments, but Thackeray

varies the strictly memoir-form by introducing dialogue to a much greater extent than is normal in such works. It is obvious that the memoir-form, varied when necessary, was ideally suited to Thackeray's temperament, for he preferred to deal with a spacious theme in a reminiscential fashion. In Esmond, he was able to stray beyond the limits of his plot, to indulge in digressive comments and to give a full impression of the social background, because an old man writing in a vein of reminiscence would naturally allow his memory to play on the historical events and the social manners and customs he had witnessed in his younger days.

Yet though looseness of structure is inherent in the design of Esmond it would be wrong to infer that it is carelessly constructed. In spite of its informal manners its design is worked out with some care, especially in the social scenes in which the author is plainly anxious not to omit anything that will contribute to fullness of impression. The beginning is well contrived. Thackeray describes Esmond's meeting with the Castlewood family with whom his fortunes are to be indissolubly linked, before some retrospective chapters give Esmond's earlier history and that of the ancestors of the Castlewoods. The smallpox incident is essential to the main plot for its effect on the relations of Lord and Lady Castlewood. Esmond's residence at Cambridge is described in general terms and comparatively briefly, because it serves little beyond indicating the passage of time. The duel between Lord Mohun and Lord Castlewood takes us back to the main sequence of events, although their gambling, quarrels, and fight is elaborated probably as much with a view to

indicating the amusements of some fashionable gentlemen at the time as for their influence on the fortunes of the other characters. On leaving prison Esmond enters the army and now historical events hitherto reported in passing are in the foreground of the picture. Perhaps Esmond's campaigns are described too conscientiously, though after describing Blenheim in sufficient detail Thackeray passes more quickly over Marlborough's other battles in which Esmond served, ~~and~~ since except for the presence of the hero in them they have no very close relation with the rest of the story.

However, when Esmond returns to London for the winter the threads of the plot are again gathered together and the hopelessness of his love for Beatrix drives him unconsciously nearer to Lady Castlewood. Up to the last few chapters the historical and the fictitious elements develop for the most part pari passu, with a certain degree of interaction. But with the formation of the plot to bring the Old Pretender to his dying sister, Queen Anne, the two elements converge, until they are united in the climax. The Old Pretender's pursuit of Beatrix causes the failure of the plot to place him on the throne and at the same time it brings to Esmond a full realisation of the folly of his love for the worthless Beatrix. To achieve this culmination Thackeray has to violate historical truth by bringing the Old Pretender to London before Anne's death, but from a purely artistic point of view this liberty with historical fact is quite justified. It is by no means beyond the liberties allowed in historical fiction.

By allowing Esmond to tell his own story Thackeray largely forbids him a single opportunity of letting him~~self~~ be seen through

the eyes of others. In Barry Lyndon, its author also allows the hero to tell his own story. But that is a rather different case, for in it Thackeray's purpose was in a semi-ironical fashion to make a complacent rascal relate his own story. ~~Barry is a reckless rogue, and the more barely and wickedly he tells his own reminiscences, the better we like to listen to him.~~ Esmond is not a rogue but a virtuous man. The difficulty is that a virtuous man except in some instances, such as those of David Copperfield, Francis Osbaldistone, David Balfour and Denis Duval, can hardly relate his own experiences without appearing priggish and self-satisfied. Thackeray in Esmond never escapes this danger, though he ingeniously employs sometimes the first person method and sometimes the third.

Though Thackeray has introduced many historical personages into Esmond, ~~they figure like those~~ as in Barry Lyndon and The Virginians, ~~that is to say,~~ they do not do much to determine events. Only Steele and Addison, The Duke of Marlborough and General Webb, Lord Mohun and the Old Pretender are drawn at any length. The other literary figures, wits, and some politicians of the age who are introduced are not engaged in any great action which bring out their characters clearly. They crowd together in the pages of the novel, as in Barry Lyndon and The Virginians, only to suggest the history of the age. Even the more important ones, except Lord Mohun and The Old Pretender, do not have much effect on the main plot.

Among those characters Steele who is described at greatest length seems to be handled with an excessive degree of sentimentalism and even with a patronising touch. The reader cannot help feeling

that it is impossible for Steele to have been such a harmless, amiable, weak-willed sot whose good-nature excited an affectionate pity. Thackeray does not travesty the character of Steele as he does that of the Old Pretender, but he appears to exaggerate his most foolish traits. Steele appears in Esmond as "the idlest and best natured of men."[1] It is evident that his amiable weakness of character appealed to Thackeray who was ever ready to condone venial faults, such as laziness and conviviality. This view of Steele is the same as Thackeray had given in a more expanded form in the third lecture of The English Humourists, where much is made of his sinning and repenting, his loving and suffering. "Let us think gently of one who was so gentle: let us speak kindly of one whose own breast exuberated with human kindness."[2] Steele's contemporaries practically all agreed that he was a good-natured fellow, but John Dennis, a literary enemy, asserted that there was a considerable streak of vanity in his disposition. Other unfriendly critics have declared that Steele was something of a toady in his relations to Addison and that he continually took advantage of the generosity of his friends. But Thackeray prefers to credit him with weaknesses which with sentimental treatment can be turned into engaging traits.

Addison appears in Esmond just what a reader of Spectator would expect him to be dignified, cultured, sedate, a trifle priggish. But Thackeray apparently did not feel the same sympathy for, and attachment to, Addison as he did to Steele. True there

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1. Esmond P.402.
2. The English Humourists (Collier edition) P.123.

is the famous remark in The English Humourists about "this dear preacher without orders - this parson in the tye-wig,"[1] and the virtues of Addison are eulogised in as eloquent a style as Thackeray can command. But there are a few covert criticisms of Addison discernible in The English Humourists and Esmond. Thackeray seems to delight in noting the fact that "the great and good Joseph Addison"[2] had a certain weakness for wine. In Esmond there is an innuendo that Addison judged the hero's play unfavourably, because his own tragedy, Cato, was then appearing. Perhaps there is a hint here of Pope's lines:

"Should such a man, too fond to rule alone,
Bear like the Turk, no brother near the throne."[3]

But on the whole Thackeray's portrait of Addison seems to be just and near enough the contemporary estimate of him. Addison was the type of man whom Thackeray was able to understand, as both of them were prigs, Addison being the greater and more solemn prig.

Marlborough's portrait is an effort of genius, even though it is not entirely just. He appears as a brave commander unflinchingly stern, always cool and resolute, bearing himself with the same composure in all situations, in danger, in victory, or in defeat, in his tent planning campaigns, in front of his assembled army, or in the heat of action. His conscience is never troubled by twinges of remorse, and his emotions seem to be frozen. He betrays no signs of love or hatred, of pity or

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1. The English Humourists P.81.
2. Ibid. P.69.
3. See Pope's "Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot" in Pope's Poetical Works (The Globe Edition: 1869) P.277.

fear. He is capable of the greatest daring or of committing the meanest action. The Duke lied, we are told, cheated women, and robbed beggars of halfpence. But it must be understood that Thackeray is writing of Marlborough from the point of view of Esmond; and when the author criticises Marlborough, he is only expressing opinions and making statements which were certainly current at the time - a most gossiping time. It is only natural that a kinsman of General Webb's when years later in his Virginian home he wrote his life-story, should express himself as a partisan. This criticism is not historically inaccurate for Marlborough was keenly criticised in his own life-time, and in a story reflecting the thought of the time it would have been inaccurate to represent him as above criticism.

The hero of Wynendael, General Webb, with whom Esmond served on the campaign was related to Colonel Richmond Webb, whose daughter was the novelist's grand-mother. Probably this accounts for Thackeray's amusing portrait of General Webb, whose deepest convictions concern his own genius, good looks and valour. Sprung from ancient stock and handsome in figure he constantly compares himself with the great Duke. He believes to the end of his days that the Duke wanted to deprive him of his honour won at Wynendael. In fact, the General was just a foolish, vain, genial, fellow, but Thackeray represents him as a reckless hero, impatient of discipline and contemptuous of his superior's prowess, as is shown in the London Gazette scene.

Lord Mohun[1] apart from the Old Pretender, is the only historical

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1. For a thorough study of this character, see A Noble Rake, the life of Charles Fourth Lord Mohun, being a study inf the historical background of Thackeray's Esmond, by Robert Stanley Forsyth, Havard University Press, 1928.

character, the introduction of whom serves to bring out the qualities of the hero and the heroine. His strikingly handsome appearance and air of soldierly courage win him the hearts of several beauties. But he has all the habits of the libertine, appearing particularly despicable in his callous abandonment of his wife. He twice brings misfortune on the family of Castlewood, by killing first Lord Castlewood and then the Duke of Hamilton, who is engaged to Beatrix. But for Esmond, he would have killed even Frank. His ruthless villainy and treachery are clearly contrasted with the honest devotion of Henry Esmond.

Of all the historical personages in Esmond the old Pretender is dealt with most unfairly. It is impossible to condone the travesty that Thackeray has given of this character, even admitting that the exigencies of his plot made it necessary to represent the Prince as easily attracted by a pretty face. Far from being a gay young libertine addicted to the pursuit of chambermaids, James III was the most serious and harmless of the Stuarts and his domestic life gave no cause for reproach. In temperament and conduct he seems to have resembled his grand-father Charles I, rather than his uncle, Charles II. "The Prince dined with a good appetite, laughing and talking very gaily."[1] writes Thackeray, whereas the Hanoverians nicknamed him, "poor old Mr. Melancholy." Age can change a man's outlook greatly, but the careless, licentious young Prince of Thackeray's is clearly not the same person who wrote

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1. Esmond P.470.

years afterwards, when his son Prince Charles had left for Scotland in 1745: "The weather is fine, and a number of people have come out, but all places are melancholy to me when I have not my Bairns about me, for though I thought I loved them a great deal, yet I did not think it was so much as now I feel it."[1] It is regrettable that Thackeray should have so misrepresented the most unfortunate and the most pathetic of the Stuart line.

Thackeray himself, however, realised the subordination of his historical personages; he knew they were merely incidental to the action, and makes it clear that his essential interest is in the fictitious characters. They are never false either to their time or to themselves. The world of Castlewood is indeed admirably depicted. The vague background of rebellion and Jesuit intrigue gives an air of added peace to the happy and tranquil inhabitants. True, the Jesuit Father Holt, with his strange comings and goings, his secret hiding places, and his inaccurate information, is a type rather than a man. He is little more than a stock representative of the unscrupulous, crafty, intriguing Jesuit who existed largely in the imagination of Protestants, something the same as Kingsley's Jesuits in Westward Ho! although Thackeray does not regard Roman Catholics with the same virulent hatred. Father Holt is drawn, perhaps, with a touch of malice, which reminds us that his portrait was painted at the time when England was in an uproar over papal aggression. The one

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1. Prince Charles Edward by Carola Oman, London: (1935) P.34.

purpose of his constant intrigues is to bring about the restoration of his Church and King. His personality subjects those who came in contact with him; love, a cheerful wit, and cultivated good humour are his weapons for subduing others. His sincerity and the mystery that gathers about him makes him a figure that attracts reverence. He is what Jews call a shlemihl, one who never succeeds in what he attempts through his own fault.

The old Marchioness, the wicked Dowager of Chelsey, is but Miss Crawley and Mme. de Bernstein artfully disguised, and more thickly coated with paint. Yet she is as real and wonderful as Lady Castlewood and Beatrix. To do justice to Thackeray, his old women of quality are unexcelled, and the Dowager Lady Castlewood would save any play or story, though we have only her Bernstein period without her Beatrix one.

Lord Castlewood and his son are by no means ill-depicted, and the former is rather a typical Thackerayan character, a man of pleasure who is not altogether abandoned. He degenerates into a besotted drunkard, wasting his days in playing at cards and dice. He likes good company and pretty faces very much. Besides his desertion of his wife and son when they were attacked by smallpox indicates moral cowardice. He is aware that he is to blame for the strained relations between his wife and himself, but he will neither admit his faults nor endeavour to amend them. He knows all the time that he is unjustly keeping his kinsman out of his right, but he acknowledges this only on his death-bed. In short, he is a selfish and foolish man, though not without traces of generous

feelings. He is a Rawdon Crawley, more happily mated, and when the crisis of his destiny arrives, he fears himself as did Rawdon, like a man.

Nor is the son unworthy of his brave, spendthrift, debonair father. He is vain, proud and not very witty; but he has an admirable disposition - what the old Dowager calls the bel air. His pride and vanity are nourished by the circumstances of his career, by his early succession to the title, by parental indulgence, by flattery, and the deference of inferiors. Yet he has some good traits, kindly impulses, loyalty to his friends, and a consciousness of his family dignity. He appears in the best colours when engaged in the last great conspiracy. He stands by Henry Esmond, of whom he is really fond; he does not humble himself to a drunken prince, and he does all that a brother can do to save his sister's honour. He is quite well drawn as a type of the young lords of that time.

Henry Esmond himself seems out of harmony with his surroundings. He is too much of the Victorian idea of a hero to fit into the eighteenth century background. What Professor Elton says of Thackeray's gentleman applies admirably to Esmond. "His English gentlemen are mostly a little dull, and are all the more real for that. They are noble natures, they are apt to make some big silent sacrifice, for which they may or may not be rewarded upon earth. They are also apt to be a trifle absurd, especially in the eyes of women; but even this trait goes to their credit. Don Quixote's descendants have an attraction for Thackeray, and he seldom fails to make us believe in them."[1] Esmond is like most

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1. A Survey of English Literature 1830-1880, Vol. ii. P.240.

of the colourless heroes of Scott - upright, honourable, courteous and chivalrous in an old-fashioned way, but too serious, too conscious of his own rectitude and of the vices of others. Such a hero is rather chilling and respectable, after the typically wayward, but manly and generous hero of eighteenth-century fiction, such as Tom Jones. By contrast with the latter Esmond is lacking in vitality. He might have appeared more at his ease as a Puritan gentleman, as a kind of youthful Colonel Hutchinson, but among the gay, witty, cynical and rather sceptical men about town or even among the boorish, fox-hunting countrymen Esmond is plainly something of a misfit. Not infrequently he has been described as a "prig", even by Thackeray himself[1], and there is considerable truth in this assertion, for Esmond is one whom it is possible to respect, but scarcely to regard with affectionate admiration. No doubt it was a sense of dissatisfaction with the portrayal of Esmond that caused Thackeray to describe him as a "prig", and the creator's opinion is one that cannot be easily ignored or explained away by an analysis of Esmond's traits or discussions of the precise significance of priggishness. Esmond is no hypocrite, but he is generally aware of his own moral superiority either as compared with the gambling and drunken Lord Castlewood or the licentious Prince. Because of his seriousness there is something incongruous, or, if not incongruous, ludicrous in his distraction for Beatrix, which one would expect from a raw youth or an ardent, impressionable fellow but scarcely from a man of the experience and gravity of Esmond. However, his

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2. See Melville's Life of Thackeray Vol. i. P.293. Cf. Trollope's Thackeray (English Men of Letters) P.129.

quick change-over to the mother is justified by their greater similarity of temperament. For all his priggishness Esmond makes a deeper impression on readers than any of the other characters, except Beatrix. The device of including a preface by another hand is ingenious, but on this occasion it does not help greatly to improve the character of Esmond, since its dutiful, obituary tone serves only to thicken the cloud of solemnity that hangs around him.

The hero is well matched in his "dear mistress", towards whom his childish gratitude for protection grows with his growth into a complex feeling, in which filial affection and an unconscious passion are curiously blended. So unconscious, indeed, is the passion that though the reader has no difficulty in interpreting it, Esmond himself is for years the avowed and persevering though hopeless lover of this very lady's daughter. It has been said that no one likes a story in which a man transfers his love from the daughter to the mother. Perhaps the real cause of the objection lies in the disparity of age between Esmond and Lady Castlewood. The hero is about ten years younger than the heroine. But Esmond is older than his age; while his lady, from her country breeding and tender purity, is younger than hers. In a contemporary novel this disparity of age would not be so noticeable, but it seems incompatible with our notions that the historical novel ~~should be~~ is generally romantic, and it is difficult to see romance in such a union. But Esmond does not profess to be a romantic novel and Thackeray is perfectly at liberty to introduce an unromantic ~~in~~conclusion, which after all is satisfactory in view of the happiness of the marriage. The relation between Esmond and his "dear mistress"

is of such a kind that nothing short of consummate skill could have saved it from becoming ridiculous or offensive or both. But nowhere does Thackeray show greater psychological insight than in the gradual change of Lady Castlewood's feelings towards Esmond, from motherly love of the boy to love of the man. This change is described with such delicacy that it becomes fully apparent only at the very point where the development of the story demands it. Esmond himself only gradually becomes aware of his feelings and realises his love for Lady Castlewood fully at the very end of the story.[1]

Lady Castlewood is a type of Thackeray's favourite heroine. She is intensely jealous in her love of her husband and children, and yet she is capable of entirely laying aside all thought of self. She is unjust and hasty both to her husband and to Esmond, and yet thoroughly appreciative of the good around her. She is placed in an unnatural rivalry with her daughter, but from the moment she learns that Esmond loves Beatrix she does her best to bring about a marriage between them. She is thoroughly loyal to her husband, when he is alive; but when she is a widow, after being angry with Esmond, and grateful to him, she becomes gradually conscious of all his worth. Both in her temperament and career Lady Castlewood resembles Amelia in Vanity Fair. Both of them are gentle, trusting, loving women who married handsome and attractive, but self-indulgent men. Lady Castlewood is less pathetically clinging and simple than Amelia and acts like a proud

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1. Before the duel Esmond seems from his words to Viscount Castlewood, to have a suspicion on the matter based on the fact that the lady fainted when she was told that 'Harry' was killed.

and dignified woman, when she learns that her husband has been unfaithful to her. Both at the second time of asking marry more worthy husbands, though the circumstances are again rather different. Esmond turns to Lady Castlewood only when his hopes of gaining her daughter's love have been finally dashed. Dobbin's attachment to Amelia never wavers but he has to contend with a stronger devotion on her part to the memory of her dead husband than Esmond has in the case of Lady Castlewood.

But the greatest triumph of Thackeray's art is the heroine, Beatrix. She is undoubtedly a good foil for Esmond, for no one can accuse Beatrix of being faultless; no one is less of a prig than she. Beatrix is placed in a remarkable relationship to her mother. Between mother and daughter there is almost every opposition of character. The mother is gentle, pious, and resigned; the daughter is bold, self-seeking and imperious. One thinks of Beatrix instinctively in naming the novel; and she stands by the side of Becky Sharp as one of the two great women characters Thackeray has created. It is curious how definite an impression her character makes on one, considering the few appearances she makes in the story; but she is drawn in bold outlines from the first. The pretty baby who sulked when her brother was petted; the child who fled to her father when her mother was vexed, and to her mother when her father stormed; whose malicious tongue almost caused Lord Castlewood to quarrel with his guest; who mourned only for herself when Hamilton died, is marked from her earliest years by pride and ambition. The expression of her compelling ambition has the intensity of tragedy, and in its effect on her nature it has tragic consequences. But

she is not deadened to generous emotions, for she admires Esmond's great renunciation and shows her admiration by offering him a caress before the Duke of Hamilton. In her courage and high spirits she resembles Shakespeare's Beatrice and also in her wit. Thackeray's Beatrix might well have stood up for the rights of woman like Beatrice and other female characters in Shakespeare such as Portia and Rosalind. Beatrix has none of those foibles, half-allied to virtues, by which weak women fall away into misery or perhaps distraction. She does not want to love or to be loved. She only wants to be admired, and to make use of the admiration she shall achieve for the material purposes of her life.

In his pseudo-Spectator paper Thackeray writes: "'Tis admiration such women want, not love that touches them; and I can conceive, in her old age, no more wretched creature than this lady will be, when her beauty has deserted her when her admirers have left her, and she has neither friendship nor religion to console her."[1] Had Thackeray The Virginians in mind when he wrote Esmond? The sentence just quoted would seem to indicate his intention to draw Beatrix in her old age. It was a favourite theme of his - the former wit and beauty, now old and rich, as witness Miss Crawley, Lady Kew, and the Baroness Bernstein.

Beatrix's tragedy is paralled by the triumph of Esmond. This contrast indicates that here, as always, Thackeray is writing with a deliberate purpose and is not merely actuated by an artistic impulse. He presents characters and events not only as a representatio

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1. Esmond Book III P.395.

of life, but in such a way as to stress the good consequences of uprightness and the appropriate rewards of unworthiness and evil. Beatrix's selfishness is a fatal defect, and Thackeray allows the reader to see the inevitable result, saying by his manner as the story proceeds, "Let this be a warning to you." For Esmond is a moral story, dealing with worldly success and moral failure, and illustrating how selfish and ambitious people like Beatrix fall. On the whole, it is a sermon on "Vanity Fair", the favourite theme of Thackeray, that is preached here and exemplified by the characters and situations.

Esmond is justly assigned priority of place among Thackeray's historical novels by the majority of critics. Its superiority in construction and its virtuosity of style partly accounts for this high estimate, but other considerations justify one in placing it as an historical novel above Thackeray's other productions in that line. It may not be a greater novel than Vanity Fair, but it has more historical colouring; it includes more political and religious intrigue, describes military action more elaborately, and in short indicates more fully the external factors that influence the development of characters. It has more definitely historical colouring than Barry Lyndon also, while it is fuller in characterisation. It gives a more detailed and balanced picture of the relations between characters and their influence on one another. By comparison the characterisation of Barry Lyndon is rather slight, although it was no part of the author's intention in it to crowd the stage, as the whole point of the novel was to trace the career of a self-satisfied rogue. But all the same the ampler scale of Esmond is a point in its favour. It may also be noted that Esmond shows more concentration in its social

background which makes far greater effectiveness. Barry Lyndon ranges over Dublin, London, and continental society, whereas Esmond, except for the hero's participation in Marlborough's campaigns, is restricted to a description of the town and country life of the English aristocracy of the period. Consequently the reader's interest is not divided as it is in The Virginians, where the scene changes from America to England and back again, and Thackeray is walking all the time on familiar ground. Both in design and in the handling of historical and social material Esmond is Thackeray's most successful venture into the field of historical fiction.

V.

Thackeray's fourth historical novel, The Virginians, appeared as a sequel to Esmond. As Esmond followed on The Lectures on the English Humourists, so The Virginians came in due sequence after the lectures upon The Four Georges (1860) and Thackeray's two journeys to America. During his first visit to the United States Thackeray had conceived the idea of a sequel to Esmond, dealing with the emigrant branch of the family. But he did not contemplate writing the Virginians, till his second visit. During it he made many friends, to one of whom he said, "I shall write a novel with the scene laid here.... I shall not write it for two years. It will take me at least two years to collect my material and become acquainted with the subject. I cannot write upon a subject I know nothing of... I shall give it the title of the two Virginians... I shall lay the scene in Virginia. There will be two brothers who will be prominent characters; one will take the

English side in the war, and the other the American; and they will be both in love with the same girl."[1]

Over this rough draft of the novel Thackeray seems to have pondered for a considerable time. He arrived home for the second visit in the Spring of 1856. Lady Ritchie could remember his speaking of the book. "I have found a very pretty title," he said; "I am going to call it The Virginians."[2] In the following January, though he must have been meditating on the new novel, he wondered whether he should "ever write a book again;"[3] because he had hopes of entering the House of Commons. But his hopes were disappointed and he went back to his desk. And in October 1857 appeared in monthly parts the first number of The Virginians.[4] He worked well during November and December, completing the first three numbers of the story, but the following numbers were written "with extraordinary throes and difficulty".[5] His old habit of procrastination soon brought the printer's boy to the door, and he wrote each number for the waiting press. "I only got my number done last night," he wrote, "and am getting more disgustingly lazy every day. I can't do the work until it's wanted. And yet with all these attacks of illness wch. I have, I ought, you know I ought."[6] During the following five weeks he wrote two

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1. Mellville: The Life of Thackeray ii. 14-15.

2. Biographical Introduction to The Virginians xxxviii.

3. A Bibliographical Note to The Virginians by Walter Jerrold (J. M. Dent edition, 1902) vii.

4. Immediately after, Thackeray sent John Brown a tracing of the design for its wrapper with the remark, 'This is the best part of The Virginians which is done as yet.'

5. See Malcorn: Thackeray: A Personality (London, 1943) P.332.

6. See Thackeray's letter to W. D. Robinson on 23rd Jan., 1858, quoted by Lady Ritchie in works with Biographical Introduction xxxvi.

more numbers and suffered "3 confounded attacks of spasms." On 10th April, having suffered "2 attacks within the last fortnight of my enemy" he had written only three pages of his next number. He was aware of the defects in the story, for he wrote, "The book's clever but stupid, that's the fact. I hate story-making incidents, surprises, love-making, &c., more and more every day;"[1] A month later John Blackwood wrote "Thackeray says he cannot get ahead with The Virginians, and was desperately pushed with the last No., having written the last 16 pages in one day, the last he had to spare. The last two Nos. are, I think, better than their predecessors, but he must improve much or the book will not keep up his reputation."[2] An American writer J. T. Field in his Yesterday With Authors records how Thackeray in August 1859 wrote the last pages of The Virginians, on the very day that he had invited a party of friends to dine with him. The most interesting part in the record is that "the guests were all assembled at the time Thackeray appointed but no host appeared. It was not till one hour later that Thackeray bounded in, still in his morning dress, with ink still visible on his fingers. Clapping his hands, and pirouetting briskly on one leg, he cried out, "Thank Heaven, the last sheet of The Virginians has just gone to the printer."[3] But the last number (a double one) did not appear until October, when the completed book was issued in two volumes.

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1. See his letter to the Baxters on 23rd April, 1856, op. cit. works with Biographical Introduction xliii.
2. See Blackwood's letter to G. W. Lewes quoted by Malcorn in his Thackeray: A Personality P. 335.
3. Op. cit. Melville's Life of Thackeray ii 36 n.

The reception of the Virginians was more favourable in America than in England. Many readers there thought Thackerey's pictures of Virginia life perfect, and Washington Irving declared even during its publication that it would be a fine book. He said he knew that Thackeray was " a man of great mind, far superior to Dickens. Dickens's prejudices are too limited to make such a book as Thackeray is capable of making of the Virginians " 1. But in England as soon as the book was issued in book form, an article appeared in the Edinburgh Review , declaring," The grand objection to revivifying the social era depicted in the Virginians, is that it has never died; it has been perpetuated for us by immortal artists .... Fielding, Smollett, Richardson, Hogarth, have already done that which the author of The Virginians undertakes to do; and they have done it with a truth, breadth, freedom, on which morality and decency forbid their imitator to venture in our age. Mr. Thackeray's hand is perpetually checked by moral consider--ations, and his picture is therefore timid and incomplete" 2.

[Apart from the old newspapers and histories dealing with the social life of that time, and the eighteenth century novels which Thackeray knew intimately, the sources of the Virginians consist of books such as Thackeray used for Barry Lyndon, like Boswell's Life of Samuel Johnson, Johnson's Lives of the English Poets, Joseph Spence's anecdotes (1820) , Gibbon's Autobiography, Goray's Letters, Lord George Selwyn's Letters, Horace Walpole's Letters, and the drawings of Hogarth. Thackeray also consulted Marshall's J

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1. Works with Biographical Introduction xxxiii.

2. See Edinburgh Review. vol 110. Oct. 1859. p. 444.

Life of Washington (1804 - 7), and the monthly Gentleman's Magazine for the period. For military sources he may have consulted W. Heath's Memoirs (1798). R. Lamb's Original and Authentic Journal of Occurrences during the late War (1809), Henry Lee's Memoirs of the War in the South (1827), Colonel J.G. Simcore's Military Journal, (1844), Colonel B. Tarlaton's History of the Campaigns 1780 - 1, (1787), and J. Thacker's Military Journal during the American War, (1827). Thackeray utilised also works on that period by later writers, such as Macaulay's Essay on Johnson, (1831), the relevant sections of Scott's Lives of the English Novelists, (1841), and Irving's Life of Washington, (1855 - 9), although Irving's work was being published during the time he was writing The Virginians.7

Besides being a sequel to Esmond, The Virginains also serves as a kind of link between Esmond and other novels, such as Pendeunis, The Newcomes, and Philip —— for the two Virginians, Harry and George Warrington are the grandsons of Colonel Esmond, and the ancestors of the George Warrington who figures in the three later novels. This running of character and relationships through his various stories is one of the most obvious features of Thackeray's work. Balzac, Trollope, Zola, Galsworthy, Hugh Walpole and Compton Mackenzie, also make some characters appear in more than one novel or inter-relate them. Where Thackeray could not make the same personages reappear on account of the different historical periods of the novels, he tried to introduce an ancestral relationship. This is meant to convey a sense of the continuity of human life, and, what is more, it adds to the effect of reality we often get from his stories. Such a family history forms, as it were, a page in the social history of England.

Though it was Thackeray's habit to link his stories one to another by references to, or the reappearance of, characters, or by their relationships, yet no two of his stories are so closely related to each other as Esmond and The Virginians, because they are linked together by both characters and relationships. [1] Beatrix, who is a young and dazzling beauty in Esmond reappears in The Virginians as an old woman, Madame de Bernstein. The two heroes are the grandsons of the hero of Esmond and his wife, Lady Castlewood; their one daughter born at the estate in Virginia, married a Warrington, with the result that the Virginians are the issue of that marriage. In the meantime, another generation of the Castlewood family occupies the old home at Castlewood in England. These relationships are accentuated by the strong sense of family pride, which forms a bond between the Warringtons and the Castle--woods. They are united in their regard for the family seat, the sight of which fills Henry Warrington with emotions of pride and joy.

The historical contents of The Virginians,[2] although in actual bulk, it is probably not less than that of Esmond, and undoubtedly more than that of Barry Lyndon, appears to be introduced in a rather perfunctory manner, more to complete the social picture of the time than as an integral part of the story. The main theme of The Virginians is the experiences of two young Americans of different tastes and dispositions on their visits to England. This purpose might very well have been achieved, even if the historical parts of the story had been omitted. The ill-fated expedition against Fort

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1. Talking to Motley, in May, 1858, while he was still at work on The Virginians, Thackeray said that he intended to write a novel on the time of Henry V., which would be his capo d'opera, in which the ancestors of all his present characters, Warringtons, Pendennings, and the rest - should be introduced. It would be a most magnificent performance, "he added - and nobody would read it ". This purpose, as we know, even if ever very seriously entertained, was never fulfilled.

2. For its sources see Appendix B: I. P401.

Duquesne in which George Warrington was captured is described in a summary fashion, and here, as in Vanity Fair, Thackeray is more concerned with the hopes and fears of those who were left behind than with the combattants themselves. This incident's chief value lies in the fact that it gave Thackeray an opportunity of intro--ducing the foremost American of his day, George Washington, and of linking him by ties of friendship to his heroes. Again the brief account of the American War of Independence, the effect of which in dividing a family against itself was meant originally to have provided a principal motive in the story, does little more than give some colour to the claim that The Virginians is an historical novel dealing with events in the Old and the New Worlds. Certainly it has little to do with the main theme of the novel, for by this time, the interest aroused by the varying fortunes of the two heroes has long been spent. Both have settled down too long in life to be disturbed again and sent away on a campaign.

Accordingly it may be said that the events drawn from American history are largely superfluous to the story, and are too brief and generalised to have much value in themselves. There is nothing in them to the vivid quality we find in the description of Brussels before and during Waterloo in Vanity Fair. And the expedition against the French coast in which Harry serves as a volunteer, and which culminates in the action at St. Cas, seems rather pointless and trivial. It merely serves as a convenient excuse for removing Harry from the stage, and bringing George into the limelight. Thackeray himself, seems to have been conscious that he was embodying events in his narrative, which would occupy a small place in historical annals. "He writes, "don't you see that it would have been easy to send our Virginian on a more glorious campaign ? " . [1] This tone is similar

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1. The Virginians (Collier edition), Book III, p. 179.

to Thackeray's attitude to historical events in Barry Lyndon. He takes pains to point out that Barry was a common soldier, who saw only that part of the battle in which he was himself engaged, and who was unlikely to know the progress of the whole battle and the plans of the Commanders.

When he outlines the position of Anglo-French relations in the Old World before the attack on Fort Duquesne, Thackeray remembers that public events were occurring which were to influence the fortune of all the Warrington family. Yet it is precisely in this respect that one thinks The Virginians most defective as an historical novel; the events in it do not seem to one to influence in any considerable degree the fortunes of the characters. True, George is captured by the enemy and presumed killed; he is deeply mourned by his relatives. But when he returns unexpectedly the situation is not different from what it would have been had he returned from a prolonged holiday. He himself is not changed and Harry feels no resentment at being dislodged from the position of heir. Similarly Harry drifts into the French campaign, after he has grown tired of the social pleasures of London and the fact that the brothers take different sides in the American War of Independence in no way disturbs the harmony of their relations or affects their social position. On the whole, as is generally the case with the heroes of Thackeray's historical novels, the careers of Harry and George appear to be determined more by their own dispositions than by any historical incidents in which they are involved.

As in the other historical novels emphasis is mostly placed

on the social background, which is rather fuller than that of Barry Lyndon, the period of which is almost the same, and it shows, though at a later date, much the same strata of society as Esmond does. There are the country family, the Castlewoods, the military men, the gamblers, the men about town, the men of letters and so forth. It is needless to discuss the social background of the Virginians in detail for it does not differ greatly from that of the other novels. However, it illustrates Thackeray's generalised method of depicting the social scene particularly well in the description of Tunbridge Wells, at which place Thackeray concentrates more celebrities in the spheres of fashion and of literature than are ever likely to have been there at the same time.

In The Virginians Thackeray again utilises his favourite method of professing to write memoirs. At the beginning he elaborates at greater length than usual the fiction that he has compiled the narrative from the letters and papers of the Warringtons. No doubt he was seeking to justify the composite nature of the story and to account for the shifting of interest from the experiences of Harry in Part I to those of George in Part II. And much of the formlessness and lack of unity in the novel proceeds from the lack of unity in its structure. Esmond is supposed to contain the reminiscences of one individual and from the consistency with which this point of view is maintained it possesses as much unity as the memoir form, which by its very nature covers a wide range, can possess. Again through all the shifting scenes of Barry Lyndon runs the connecting link provided by the personality of the hero and narrator. Denis Duval, apart

from the retrospective chapters on Mme. de Saverne, shows evidence that the finished product would have been well enough constructed. Even Vanity Fair, where looseness of construction for the sake of achieving a wide social range would have been permissible, is better planned than The Virginians. There are two characters of major importance in Vanity Fair, Amelia and Becky (however much Becky may outshine Amelia in the eyes of the reader, there is no doubt that Thackeray initially intended her to be, at least, as important a character) whose fortunes are related alternately and occasionally they come into contact with each other. A close scrutiny of the structure of the novel reveals that their stories might well have been separated, but to a superficial glance they seem to dovetail in a quite satisfactory fashion, and the transition from the experiences of a bad person to those of a good one serves to illustrate the juxtaposition of good and evil in life which the painter of Vanity Fair cannot help observing. But the two heroes of The Virginians in spite of their close relationship go their separate ways and Thackeray makes no attempt to contrast their dispositions by showing them together and noting their reactions to similar situations. The form he adopted practically precluded this method; Harry's adventures are narrated in the third person and those of George (except the story of his capture after Braddock's defeat) in the first. Thus the break between the two parts of the book is well marked. The twin brothers so differing in temperament, are planted in succession, in the English society of the middle of the eighteenth century, like the successive pilgrims along the same road in Parts I and II of Bunyan's Pilgrims Progress (1678). Barry Lyndon, Esmond,

Denis Duval, Pendennis and Philp all have at least the unity which a single hero gives, although Pendennis is more of a sequence than a development, and Philip ends weakly. But in The Virginians the interest is clumsily divided between two heroes.

Again, The Virginians lacks a climax and a close. Intentionally or unintentionally, it lacks the rounding off proper to a novel. As the story proceeds, it loses its connection and there is only a string of incidents woven together, serving for the delineation of character and the expression of sentiment, carried on through twenty-four numbers, and capable of being carried on ad infinitum, or cut short at any earlier point if it had so pleased the author. The reader is carried across from England to America, and from America to England; the resurrection of George after his supposed death is a little conventional, and his sudden appearance in England without any previous notice to his brother strikes one as rather unnatural. Perhaps after Thackeray had detained The Virginians so long in London which he knew so well, we should have been spared the unnecessary continuation: at least, after the terrible 'passing' of Baroness Bernstein, after George Warrington's 'ship' has reached 'port' as he himself put it, and after Harry is endowed with an estate and a wife, the story might have closed. But Thackeray had told one of his friends in America that he would write a story called The Two Virginians with the scene laid in Virginia and that there would be two brothers: one taking the English side in the war, and the other the American.[1] This intention had been announced again

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1. See above P.P. 96-97.

in the opening 'argument'[1] in Chapter I, in which he had committed himself to bringing the brothers face to face in the war. Though he has kept his promise and brought out his 'argument' by actually setting the two brothers on the loyalist and the rebel side respectively, the whole section on the American War of Independence is no more than an appendix to the book.

Further, in The Virginians the movement is too sluggish because the book is full of digressive garrulity. The action appreciably quickens as Harry approaches the climax of his 'rake's progress' and the scene is set for George's reappearance. But a great part of the first book, which concerns Harry's initiation into English society is rather monotonous. Even Thackeray himself seemed to have realised this, when he wrote, "... and here is a third of a great story done equal to two-thirds of an ordinary novel - and nothing actually has happened, except that a young gentleman has come from America to England."[2] Again, he wrote, " ... it ought to have been at its present stage of the story at No.10. I dawdled fatally between 5 and 10"[3]. The sluggish

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1. This opening 'argument' with its story about the Swards probably seems to many readers a piece of fancy, instead of which it is an interesting bit of history. The famous writer mentioned was W.H. Prescott, the historian, while the swords were those of his grandfather, Colonel William Prescott, Republican, and of Mrs. Prescott's grandfather, Captain John Linzer of the Royal Navy. At Prescott's death, the swords were transferred, by his desire, to the Massachusetts Library. "My dear Thackeray," wrote Prescott the historian, "I was much pleased on seeing that you opened your new novel with a compliment to my two swords of Bunker's Hill Memory and their unworthy proprietor." - see Biographical Introduction to The Virginians XXXIV for the letter Prescott wrote to Thackeray Nov. 30, 1857.
2. See Thackeray's letter to Baxter, quoted by Lady Ritchie in Works with Biographical Introduction XL iii.
3. See Thackeray's letter to Dr. John Brown, Nov. 4, 1858. Ibid. XLii-XLiii.

movement and digressive garrulity were due to the circumstances in which the novel was written - fits of contemplative hesitancy, attacks of illness, and feverish bursts of "pot-boiling" to supply the waiting printer. This propensity to digress, indeed, is to be found in every book he wrote - except Esmond and Barry Lyndon; but in The Virginians it is more conspicuous than in his early works. Every few pages, the story-teller calls a halt to address and moralise: "Dear reader", says Thackeray, "with whom I love to talk from time to time, stepping down from the stage where our figures are performing, attired in the habits and using the parlance of past ages."[1] These frequent pauses to moralise are distracting (although the passages may not be dull in themselves), because they are not an integral part of the novel which ought to be self-interpreting. Professor Saintsbury considers the frequent digressions as "hors-d'oeuvre and side dishes" of a banquet," with the solid interest of life story and manners-painting for centre, with 'various wine' of character flowing unstintedly for us, and an endless dessert of phrase and style" and asks: "How shall we quarrel with such a banquet as this?"[2] But we should say that there are too many, far too many 'side-dishes' for one banquet. Professor Elton seems to one to express a more penetrating view of Thackeray's habit of digressing, when he remarks that "We have the strange sense that the recording and portraying mind is a powerful and creative one, while the reflective

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1. The Virginians Part I. P.283.
2. A consideration of Thackeray P.233.

mind, playing upon the created scene, is of inferior quality; as though the incident and the talk came up from somewhere far within, while the comment was made by some other person of much less intelligence - somebody reading Thackeray."[1]

The number of historical personages who figure in The Virginians is pretty large, but none of them is described in great detail or reanimated with anything more than the traits ascribed to them by tradition. George Washington in The Virginians is the George Washington of popular tradition, discreet and sober beyond his years, grave and taciturn, but resolute and tenacious. "His nature was above levity and jokes; they seemed out of place when addressed to him .... His words were always few, but they were always wise; they were not idle, as our words are, they were grave, sober, and strong, and ready on occasion to do their duty."[2] Washington is of the same pattern as Esmond, an honourable, but a dull and rather priggish, fellow. General Wolfe's traits are obviously meant to fit one who is reputed to have preferred the honour of composing Gray's Elegy to military glory. He is frank, brave, and courteous, an ardent lover who "wanted heaps and heaps of laurel to take to his mistress."[3] Wolfe was to Thackeray, no doubt, rather a romantic character. General Braddock may not be so admirable a character as Washington or Wolfe, but his portrait is sketched with a rare irony and incisive energy in the following passage which is an excellent example of character

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1. A Survey of English Literature 1830-1880 Vol. ii., PP.231-2.
2. The Virginians Part I P.96
3. Ibid.

drawing in miniature: " ... The stout chief, the exampler of English elegance, who sat swagging from one side to the other of the carriage, his face as scarlet as his coat; swearing at every other word; ignorant on every point off parade, except the merits of a bottle and the looks of a woman; not of high birth, yet absurdly proud of his no-ancestry, brave as a bull-dog; savage, lustful, prodigal, generous; gentle in soft moods; easy of love and laughter; dull of wit; utterly unread; believing his country the first in the world, and he as good a gentleman as any in it."[1]

Dr. Johnson appears more frequently than he does in Barry Lyndon, but no attempt is made to give an adequate picture of him. Thackeray reproduces as Macaulay does in his Essay on Johnson, his more obvious habits, his fondness for tea, his lack of conventional good manners, his superficial arrogance, etc., features which could have been derived from even a casual reading of Boswell. Horace Walpole is represented as a cultured gossip, the impression conveyed by his letters. Samuel Richardson is the object of female adoration, but his plain appearance disappoints his adorers. Kitty, Duchess of Queensberry, is seen for a few minutes in her autumnal splendour, and the Earl of March is a typical eighteenth century gambler and libertine. For practically all these characters Thackeray is content to accept the conventional or traditional estimate, for his purpose was not so much to reanimate them and to describe their inner life as to bring them into the scene with a view to giving more verisimilitude to his representation of the

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1. The Virginians P.89.

social life of the period. In other words, the historical personages in The Virginians as those in Esmond, are introduced only to add the effect of reality to the historical background. Thackeray's method in this respect is totally different from that of Scott, who never introduces important historical characters incidentally but gives a detailed portrait of them. Scott's historical characters are of major important in his novels and not simply accessories. They were delineated in their full proportions after a careful study of documents written by themselves and of the impressions of their contemporaries. Cromwell in Woodstock (1827) for instance, was the result of a close study of the man as he appears in his writings and in the remarks of his contemporaries. Yet Thackeray does not introduce historical figures in a casual fashion owing to lack of knowledge, but owing to his preoccupation with the fictitious characters.

For Thackeray's interest in The Virginians is still in his own characters, upon whom he keeps as firm a grasp as he did upon those in Esmond. No doubt some characters in The Virginians are types. For instance Gumbo stands for the faithful negro servant of the day, of whom, in real life, Dr. Johnson's faithful Francis was one, Parson Sampson is the type of the clerical toady. But it is Thackeray's merit that while he is true to the class, he creates characters of the most undesirable individuality. Indeed Gumbo with his hundred accomplishments, his pompous lies about his master's enormous wealth and above all, his fantastic methods of love-making, is more than a type. Nor is Sampson a type only - Sampson who loves wine better than his prayers and gambling better than either. Indeed Parson Sampson who plays

a large part in The Virginians is a great contrast on the one hand to the Rev. C. T. Honeyman who wearies the reader of The Newcomes with his continued whine, and on the other to the sycophantic Bishop Tom Tusher in Esmond.

Perhaps less skilful, but equally delightful are the portraits of the Lamberts.[1] The kind, scholarly old soldier, who loved Rabelais and Montaigne's Essays, and who enjoyed gentle joking, bears a strong resemblance to his creator. Mrs. Lambert is a representative of the devoted, sentimental, tolerably well educated housewife of the upper middle class.[2] And their two daughters Hetty and Theodosia supposed to be the heroines of The Virginians are charming examples of a type, which, Thackeray who was devotedly attached to his own daughters, drew with tender affection but somehow or other they appear vague almost to faintness.

As for the two heroes, they are a sort of split Pendennis. Henry is the young men of pleasure and the soldier, and by his adventures shows us the town and the campaigns. George is the man of letters and reflection, though not without military qualities, and by his experiences he shows us the literary and dramatic world. The art of the character-painter is, of course, exercised in making the twins at once naturally like and interestingly different. Indeed Henry is but Pendennis in another dress. He is rich,

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1. According to Lady Ritchie, Thackeray found the name in a Court Guide. She believed General Lambert had another name besides this one out of the Court Guide.

2. Another of the Martha class is Vicar's wife in The Vicar of Wakefield, whose domestic qualities were enhanced by the opportunity she gave her husband of showing his superior wisdom and learning.

handsome, jovial, well-born, well-bred, and brave; he likes a jolly song and a bottle; he loves any game on foot or on horseback; among ladies he shows a modest, blushing timidity, which renders him interesting. Though he gambles with a braver recklessness than the young Pendennis, he is, like that hero, merely "wild" not "wicked", and Thackeray had rather a fondness for "Wildness" in young men.

George bears a strong resemblance to his grandfather, Henry Esmond, who, like him, sees the wars, and like him, writes a play. Perhaps to appreciate him thoroughly we have to compare him not only with his grandfather Henry Esmond but with his grandson George Warrington the younger: a group that will repay contemplation in the illustration they provide of Thackeray's grasp of life at different times and of how character is partly conditioned by period. But George is drawn with less distinctness than his brother, perhaps because it was difficult to handle two heroes. He is kept very long off the stage in person, and his early appearances are coloured by Thackeray's resolution to represent George Washington as sage and hero at once. Though valuable for its effect in creating historical atmosphere, the long account of his adventures with the Indians is rather tedious to modern taste. His noble endurance of hardships after his imprudent marriage with Theodosia Lambert is the part of his career that provides the highest degree of interest. But the dignity of his independence is rather compromised by the acceptance of assistance from poor Parson Sampson, and also of a little money from young Miles Warrington. Yet these lapses do not detract from the merit of a sober and sensible way of living in which happiness is found in the

simplicity of honest labour in a greater degree than it can be in the idle enjoyment of wealth. And Thackeray describes this life of dignified and honest poverty without any sentimentality. He is good at drawing heroes, to borrow Wordsworth's words, "not too wise or good for human nature's daily food."[1]

Still more admirable is the portrait of the mother of the two brothers', Madame Esmond Warrington of Castlewood, or as she chooses to call herself, Madame Esmond. She is drawn with much more spirit than either her priggish father or her sweet, saintly mother, Lady Castlewood. Her ~~impression~~ imperious will makes her endeavour to rule her household and estate like a queen. Family pride is one of her most outstanding traits and it, rather than want of natural affection, is responsible for her estrangement from George on his imprudent marriage. With her masterful ways, her pugnacity, her queenly graciousness to obedient subjects, her love of flattery and compliments and her unyielding pride, hers is perhaps the most strongly etched character in the book, apart from the Baroness de Bernstein, who would be, one imagines, no match for the little lady who ruled over Castlewood in Virginia. The piquancy of her character is enhanced by the gentle satire with which Thackeray handles her. "We are all miserable sinners: that's a fact we acknowledge in public every Sunday - no one announced it in a more resolute voice than the little lady. As a mortal she may have been in the wrong, of course; only she very seldom acknowledged the circumstances to herself, and to others never."[2]

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1. See Wordsworth's poem, "She was a phantom ~~light~~ of delight."
2. The Virginians P.37.

But Thackeray is at his best in the family of Castlewood in England, in which not a single character seems to be virtuous: Lord Castlewood is a polite rascal, his brother is a boor, while his sisters have no great reputation for virtue. Will Esmond's position as the younger son of a decayed noble house is in a way unfortunate, for it prevents him from entering a respectable profession. His desire for dissipation and indulgence is curbed by lack of means. He resembles Addison's Will Wimble, who accepted his position more happily, as gentleman-gamekeeper to Sir Roger de Coverley. Will Esmond also resembles Dunsey Cass in George Eliot's Silas Marner. Lady Maria who tries to ensnare her young and susceptible cousin with her autumnal attractions and eventually marries an actor, is by no means ill-drawn. But one thinks that both poetic justice and probability are a little violated in her character. Lord Castlewood is a fine specimen of the correct rogue. Though a sharper and a coward, he preserves the outward appearance of a gentleman. He is cold, selfish, and mean-spirited, the Barnes Newcome of his century, though better bred and better mannered. In brief, he was an abler man than many who succeeded better in life. He had a good name, but he had stained it. He had a considerable intelligence, and nobody trusted him and a very shrewd knowledge of mankind, which made him distrust them, and himself most of all. Lord Castlewood of The Virginians has a strong family resemblance to the Lord Castlewood of Esmond, but he is more of a calculating rogue than his ancestor. The latter is a rake indulging in gambling, drinking and sensual pleasures, but he has more generosity of apirit than his descendent.

There seems to be two strains in the Castlewood family, a good

and a bad, the former represented by Esmond and the Warringtons and the latter by the English Castlewoods. Esmond and his grandsons are not impeccable; Harry, especially, shows all the vagaries of a wild, young man, but their love of pleasure is not so deep-rooted as is that of the English Castlewoods and they have little of the selfishness and lack of self-discipline that their kinsmen show.

But the greatest figure of The Virginians is the lady who had in her youth been the lovely, pert, coquettish and scheming Beatrix Esmond, now the old Baroness de Bernstein. She is, so to speak, the presiding genius of the house of Castlewood, who not only confers distinction upon The Virginians but is one of the best portraits in Thackeray's gallery. She is a wicked old woman of the world, and, in fact, an enlarged and completed edition of the Dowager Lady Castlewood in Esmond, who patronises the young Esmond. Thackeray had a very keen eye for a worldly old woman; he realised, as few others have done, both the comedy and the tragedy of her existence. But never did he surpass the Baroness de Bernstein, who is superior to Miss Crawley in strength of will, to Lady Kew in geniality, and to both in humour.

Beatrix's old age is not notably different from what one would expect from her youth in Esmond. She is still selfish and self-seeking, ready to use others for her own advantage. Experience of life has taught her to judge the motives of other people with a penetrating shrewdness; she is even cynical as most selfish people are. Consequently she immediately sees through the designs of Lady Maria on inexperienced young Harry and determines to rescue him. In this action Beatrix may have been actuated by memories

of his grandfather. If Beatrix remains essentially the same person as she was in Esmond, age has brought some outward changes. The attractive young girl, wheedling and coaxing others by her charms, has become a sharp-spoken old lady, more capricious than ever, but caring nothing for the opinions of other people, independent and self-willed. So the Baroness is drawn cynical, imperious and unconquerable. Though she seems to have been conquered at last by the American invader, Lady Lydia, yet it is entirely owing to the aid of age and disease that the young lady has got the better of the old woman. For once Thackeray was determined to depict a character without pointing a moral or embellishing a sentiment.

The Virginians, it is generally admitted, is the least successful of Thackeray's historical novels. It was written with effort and signs of labour are obvious enough in its composition. Thackeray was carrying out a project, the plan of which he had announced and to which he felt himself bound to adhere, even if it meant executing some parts of it, such as that dealing with the American War of Independence, in a perfunctory manner. The defects of construction become more apparent also by reason of the inordinate length of the novel. Perhaps Thackeray found a certain spaciousness necessary in describing the contrasting temperaments and experiences of the two heroes, and the differences between English and American society. But there seems to be no very convincing reason why he should have chosen to introduce two heroes into the novel, for both of them represent types he had already drawn in earlier works, such as Pendennis. True, Harry's experiences illustrate the manners of one section of English society

that of soldiers and sportsmen, whereas George moves in literary and theatrical circles. Yet apart from the opportunity of meeting another generation of the English Castlewoods, one does not find much in the account of the society Harry frequents that had not already appeared in Barry Lyndon which covers practically the same period. Thackeray was possibly handicapped in The Virginians by the necessity of describing at some length the social life of American colonists with which he was comparatively unfamiliar. Thackeray wrote best of the manners of a society in whose literature he had steeped himself and it was obviously difficult for him to have acquired as extensive a knowledge of American life in the eighteenth century as he possessed of English. Probably the main reason for the comparative failure of The Virginians is that Thackeray strayed outside his chosen field.

VI.

Denis Duval is Thackeray's fifth and last work in historical fiction. While the story of Philip was passing though the press, Thackeray was "preparing another on which I have worked at intervals for many years past, and which I hope to introduce in the ensuing year."[1] By "another", he means, Denis Duval. Before finally beginning the story, however, he was, as Lady Ritchie tells us, "turning over two stories in his mind. The second story was to be shorter than the medieval romance, and to date from 1763, with highway robbers and sea-fights, and a sailor for a hero; this was Denis Duval."[2]

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1. Biographical Introduction to Denis Duval Xii.
2. Biographical Introduction to Denis Duval Xii.

Early in 1863, Thackeray had actually begun the novel, but his attacks of illness were so frequent and devastating in their consequences that he did not dare to begin publication as he wrote the numbers. But he was very anxious about the work. He used to carry the chapters about with him and often pull them out from his coat pcoket to consult. He took an infinity of pains over its composition, judging from the following letter: "For the last ten days I have been almost non compos mentis, when I am in labour with a book I don't quite know what happens. I sit for hours before my paper, not doing my book, but incapable of doing anything else, and thinking upon that subject always, waking with it, walking about with it, and going to bed with it. Oh, the struggles and bothers - oh, the throbs and pains about this trumpery."[1] It is said that he intended Denis Duval to be the last novel he would write and for this reason it was to be the chef d'oeuvre of his life. Yet his physical agonies often interfered with its composition. "Did you read about poor Buckle when he got the fever at Damascus, crying out, 'O my book, my book!' he asked his mother. 'I don't care enough about mine to be disquieted, when the day comes.'"[2] 'The day' came on the Christmas of 1863, when Thackeray died suddenly, leaving the work unfinished.

But as the readers of the Cornhill had already been informed that "a new serial story by Mr. Thackeray was to begin early in 1864," it was wisely decided to publish as much of the promised serial as was completed. Denis Duval began in the number for March

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1. In May 1863, to the widow of his cousin, William Ritchie. See Biographical Introduction to Denis Duval XiV.

2. Op. cit., Malcolm Elwin: Thackeray A Personality P.363.

and was continued until June. And then a set of Notes, which Thackeray left behind as if to compensate for the broken narrative, were edited and published by his Cornhill colleague, Frederick Greenwood.[1]

The Notes reveal not only the birth and progress of the story, but the pains Thackeray took to obtain a mastery of local colour when at work on an historical novel. "Scott had set the example," says Saintsbury, "not too well followed, of acquiring a pretty thorough familiarity with the history and no small one with the literature of the time of his story; and he had accidentally or purposely brought in a good deal of local and other knowledge. But he had not made the display of this latter by any means a rule and he had sometime notoriously neglected it.[2] Nor did anybody till Thackeray himself make it a point of honour to search the localities, to acquire all manner of small details from guide-books and county histories and the like, to work in scraps of colour and keeping from Newspapers and Novels and Pamphlets*."[3] And it is the local colour of Denis Duval[4] that fascinates so many admirers of Thackeray, for it is possible that this fragment survives largely

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1. cf. Some Family Letters of W.M. Thackeray, together with Recollections by his Kinswoman, Blanche Warre Cornish, New York, 1911.
2. Saintsbury's remarks need some qualification, for Scott did visit the scenes of his novels when it was possible, and even when this was impossible he took extraordinary pains with topographical details. In the writing of Quentin Durward, for instance, he worked on topographical information supplied by his friend, Skene, the antiquary, but he spent many hours in the Advocates' Library verifying this information with the aid of large-scale maps.

* Italics mine.

3. Saintsbury: Essays in English Literature (Second series) P.372.
4. For its sources see Appendix B:1. P. 40

on account of Thackeray's description of Winchelsea, and, in a measure, Rye. George Eliot also, as will be indicated more fully later, spent a considerable time in studying the topography of fifteenth century Florence in order to become thoroughly familiar with the local colour of Romola. Sir Walter Armstrong refers[1] to Millais and Thackeray at Winchelsea. It appears that Millais was at work upon a picture, and went to Winchelsea in search of the picturesque; when Thackeray appeared on the scene, and the two worked together, Millais painting while Thackeray went on with Denis Duval. Whether Millais invited Thackeray to go there we do not know; but according to Sir Walter Armstrong, Millais was so delighted with Winchelsea that he persuaded Thackeray to spend a few days there, and so made the deserted port the background for a second work of art. Thackeray, as Charles Whibley tells us, "had studied the topography and government of Winchelsea, the scene of his story with the utmost care. He had noted its three gates, its mayor and twelve jurats, its privilege of 'sending canopy-bearers to a coronation'; he had made researches into the French Reformed Church, whose members had a settlement at Rye."[2]

[The germ of his plot may be found in The Annual Register of 1782, where the history is told of M. de la Motte and the traitor Lutterloh. The brothers Weston Thackeray describes as living in 'The Friars,' were notorious characters - Joseph and George. They resided for many months in the year 1781-82 under the]

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1. See W. Armstrong's Sir J. E. Millais, His Life and Work (1885).
2. Thackeray (Modern English Writers Series) P. 238.

assumed names of William Johnson and Samuel Weston, and they made a great display, assuming the characters of country gentlemen, and highly respectable ones at that. The Annual Register, however, gives them a very different character. It calls them "two most notorious felons, who for some years have defrauded the country by various artful contrivances"[1]. They were at length captured in Wardour Street, London, March 17, and finally committed, April 17, 1782, for robbing the Bath and Bristol mail between Maidenhead and Hunslow, on the morning of January 29, 1781. On July 2 (the day before the sessions) they, with three other felons, made their escape from Newgate, having been aided by the wives of the Westons. But they were retaken and executed at Taburn on September 3, 1782. Thackeray's Notes clearly explain the extent to which actual characters - like M. de la Motte, Lutterloh, and the Weston brothers were to appear in the story. ~~The valuable~~ Thackeray's Notes ~~also~~ indicate that the remaining parts would have included a description of Pearson's great battle with Paul Jones (1779) the pirate, and of how Denis Duval, in chains in a Dutch East Indiaman, was rescued by a Kingston privateer. Denis was to take part in fighting in France, Spain and America, to see Major André's execution. In the course of his travels he was to encounter smugglers and horse-stealers, to be present at the Deal riots and to oppose the Mackerel party of smugglers. But the outstanding merit of Denis Duval, as of all his historical novels, would have been its careful reconstruction of the social life of the period and

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1. See Annual Register for 1782, P. 206.

its personages, for Thackeray spared no effort in acquiring the historical information. All the same in what has been written the facts are tinged with a romantic and delicate hue. Thackeray is not hidebound by facts, and a study of his Notes is an excellent lesson in the art of transforming bare facts by the shaping power of the imagination.

If the Annual Register for 1782 provided Thackeray with the germ of his plot, he was able to fill in the details from a knowledge of eighteenth century history drawn from a life-time of study. Most of the works he had used for Barry Lyndon and The Virginians could be utilised again, since the period is practically the same. In a novel with a theme such as Denis Duval, it is certain that the influence of Smollett's novels, particularly Roderick Random, would have been more pronounced, even than it is in Barry Lyndon. Thackeray, as has been said, also made a special study of the local history of Winchelsea and Rye. For the account of Denis's exploits at sea he meant to use papers and particulars about the gallant conduct of Captain Pearson of the Serapis which had been given him by his old friend and neighbour, Admiral Fitzroy. R. Beatson's Naval and Military Memoirs (1804) also supplied him with information on Pearson's action with Paul Jones, which he meant to incorporate in the novel. "Of Pearson's career, which Denis must have followed in after days, there is more than one memorandum in Mr. Thackeray's note-book.

"Serapis, R. Pearson. 'Beatson's Memoirs'.

"Gentleman's Magazine, 49. PP. 484. Account of action with Paul Jones, 1779.

Superficially, at least, Denis Duval is a more romantic type of historical novel than Esmond, Barry Lyndon, The Virginians, or Vanity Fair in that its events are more of the kind we associate with romance, particularly the experiences of Mme. de Saverne - the young wife married to a stern middle-aged man and immured in a dull, depressing household, while near by is the magnificent house of Cardinal de Rohan where the time is passed in banquets, plays and balls; the appearance of a friend of her husband who struggles between the claims of friendship and love; the temptation to take part in the merry-making at the Cardinal's; a clandestine visit, masked and in the company of her maid; conversion to the faith her husband abhorred; flight in the company of her lover after the loss of reason; the news of the death of her husband in a duel; and her gradual decline to an early grave - such a career obviously is strongly tinctured with romance. In spite of its Jesuit intrigues, Esmond has a much more realistic air than this. Even in its historical incidents, such as the description of a highway attack, smuggling, and the adventures on the high seas (which would have been developed later) Denis Duval bears the stamp of romance. Certainly these events are realistic in the sense that they are paralleled by what actually did occur, but they are also romantic in the sense that they are far removed from the ordinary stuff of history, such as the campaigns of Marlborough in Esmond or the preliminaries to Waterloo in Vanity Fair.

The social background of Denis Duval is widely different from that of Esmond. Instead of aristocrats with their country homes and town houses, soldiers, and men of letters we have the bourgeois

society of a country town, merchants, tradesmen, and clergymen, with one or two figures who formerly moved on the fringe of the aristocratic world, such as de la Motte and Mme. de Saverne. In Vanity Fair, of course, bourgeois society is represented, but it is the wealthier class of London merchants, the Sedleys and Osbornes, rathen than humbler provincial merchants, whose income is supplemented by the proceeds of smuggling. Barry Lyndon which is closer in period to Denis Duval than the other novels deals with different strata of society, with men of fashion, military gentlemen, adventurers, and aristocrats. The middle-class characters who appear are not respectable merchants or tradesmen, but parasites and hangers-on. But there might have been some correspondence between the type of characters Barry met during his soldiering experiences and those Denis was to encounter in the Navy. Accordingly, as far as the sociel scene is concerned Thackeray breaks new ground in Denis Duval.

The same can scarcely be said of the historical background, for the enemy, as in Esmond and Vanity Fair, is the French, although the period is different from the others, except Barry Lyndon. If Denis Duval portrays another episode in the war against France, it was to do so by sea as well as by land, and had Thackeray been able to carry out his intention it would have been interesting to see how his descriptions of naval exploits compared with those of Smollett and Marryat. The novel is too short to judge Thackeray's success in handling the historical background, but it is likely that he would have followed the same method as in Esmond. At first historical incidents are referred to casually; Denis and the boys at school follow the progress of the American War of Independence

on their maps and Dr. Barnard alludes to it in his sermons, exhorting his parishioners to loyalty. Then a post arrives from London bringing intelligence of France's recognition of the independence of the revolted American Colonies. Winchelsea, like all England and especially the towns on the southern coast, is in a state of hubbub; a public meeting is called, subscriptions are raised to arm the Volunteers and Fencibles, Old Duval being one of the first to subscribe. As far as the novel is concerned, the most important result of this state of popular excitement would probably have been its interference with the smuggling business which depended on maintaining communications with France. Denis, in any case, was soon to leave Winchelsea and his adventures in naval engagements, in fighting Paul Jones, the American Admiral, would no doubt have been inserted in the same manner as the campaigning chapters in Esmond. But, one thinks, that the historical background of Denis Duval would have lacked the impressiveness of that of Esmond - for Marlborough's campaigns were events of much greater magnitude than the end of the American War of Independence and a threat of French invasion which never materialised. There is a hint in the Notes Thackeray had prepared for the story, that Agnes was to have gone to France, whither Denis would follow her after his release from imprisonment in the outbreak of the French Revolution. Yet it is unlikely that Thackeray would have attempted to describe the events of the Revolution directly, as he does Blenheim in Esmond. He had not the dramatic gifts for doing so, and it is more probable that he would have referred casually to the outbreak of the Revolution and limited himself to showing its effect on the relations of the characters.

Consequently the historical value of Denis Duval, like that of Thackeray's other novels, would have depended on its full description of the manners and habits of a particular strata of society in the second half of the eighteenth century, although his scheme suggests that he intended to incorporate more action and adventure than usual. Unlike a country town which depended on its market and the patronage of the neighbouring gentry and farmers, Winchelsea depended on its fishing, and its commerce by sea, much of which was of an illicit variety. Respectable business men, like old Duval, the Perrüguier, were agents of a smuggling gang, known as the Markerel party, "which had its depots all along the coast and inland, and its correspondents from Dunkirk to Havre de Grâce."[1] These smuggling activities were an open secret in the town, but everyone spoke of them guardedly, making veiled references to "fishing expeditions" and "certain communication" with the French ports. Yet smuggled articles found their way into the homes of the most respected citizens. The brandy on Dr. Wing's table and the silk dresses of his wife and daughters had not yielded any duty. The trade of smuggling was handed down from father to son; Denis's father was killed on a smuggling trip and his grandfather endeavoured to initiate the youth into its ways. How widespread and highly organised smuggling had become in the eighteenth century as the result of heavy duties on wines and articles of luxury, is illustrated by other novels than Denis Duval, notably by Scott's Guy Mannering and Redgauntlet.

On land the law was defied in a similar fashion by highwaymen and foot-pads from whom travellers by stage-coach were in constant

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1. Denis Duval P. 257.

danger. Had Denis Duval been completed it would have given in the careers of the Weston brothers a pretty full description of the menace those ruffianly highwaymen constituted to law-abiding travellers. There is nothing of the Robin Hood glamour, that invests Dick Turpin, about Joseph Weston who is an ill-conditioned, cowardly ruffian with none of the attractive traits of the dashing highwayman.

In a society familiar with smuggling and highway robbing there is naturally a certain degree of lawlessness. Anyone who offends people like the Westons soon finds that malicious damage has been committed against his person or property. Mobs quickly gather and express their feelings, as in the "No Popery" demonstrations by the citizens at the funeral of the Roman Catholic, Madame de Saverne. Protestantism in Winchelsea has been reinforced by a strong infusion of persecuted Huguenot refugees from France. The eighteenth century, except in its later stages after the Methodist revival, was not fanatically religious, but this incident indicates that religious passions were always apt to be excited and might at any time flare up, as they did in the Gordon Riots which Dickens describes in Barnaby Rudge. Dr. Barnard's courage in quelling the mob shows that all of the eighteenth century clergy were not sunk in torpor or exclusively occupied in hunting with the Squire. His endeavours to diminish the extent of the contraband traffic indicate also that the clergy were interested in the social welfare of their flock, as we can see from the Diary of the Reverend John Skinner, an eighteenth century Somerset rector, who lived in a mining district.

In its form Denis Duval has considerable resemblance to Esmond

and Barry Lyndon, all professing to be the narratives of the central figure written in a reminiscent mood in old age. Denis, who was born in 1763, is supposed to have written his memories in 1820 and 1821, after he had become a Rear-Admiral and K.C.B.. Esmond had taken an active part in the military affairs of his time, as Duval would have done in naval engagements at a later date, and after the turmoil of fighting both spent the evening of their lives in serenity in the company of their beloved wives.

Perhaps the opening chapters dealing with the affairs of Mme. de Saverne and her husband and her relations with De La Motte occupy more space than they need have done, but their length might be justified on the ground that it was necessary to explain the antecedents of Agnes and De La Motte both of whom presumably would have played an important part in the story. At all events those chapters seem to occupy the same position in the structure of Denis Duval as those in Esmond, which describe the Jacobite intrigues that overshadowed the boyhood of the hero, before the coming of Lord and Lady Castlewood, or the Irish part of Barry Lyndon.

From what survives of Denis Duval it appears that it would have possessed that special kind of unity beneath an apparent looseness which the memoir form can give, by showing the relations of the hero to the same set of characters over a period of years and in the midst of changing events. Denis Duval would have had something of the construction and qualities of a picaresque novel, had Thackeray carried out his plan, but all the same Denis is not a typical picaresque hero. He has none of the waywardness, and love of pleasure which lead picaresque heroes to take an undisguised

interest in low life. His experiences would have been linked together by the fact that they were to have been concerned with the smuggling trade and the war against the French. Both of these activities were closely connected for geographical reasons, and the personage of De La Motte would have linked them to the story, as he was involved in smuggling and in spying. Hence it is clear that Denis Duval would not have represented merely a series of changing scenes or exploits performed by the hero, but events so related as to form a unified background against which the personal relations of the hero would have been shown.

It is worth noting that Denis Duval differs in some respects from Esmond in its memoir form. In a sense it adheres more closely to this form, for there is comparatively little dialogue, and more narration and description. The first person is used throughout, except naturally when Denis is reporting episodes, such as that of Mme. de Saverne and her husband, of which he has gained information from De La Motte or M. Schnorr the Protestant pastor at Saverne. In respect of form Denis Duval resembles Barry Lyndon more closely than Esmond, since both of them use the autobiographical method pretty consistently, attention is concentrated more uniformly on the hero, and there are comparatively few dramatic interludes in which the characters speak in their own persons. There are indications also that Thackeray was taking more pains to achieve historical verisimilitude, for he draws no explicit comparisons with his own time, such as we find occasionally in Esmond. Neither in this novel nor in Barry Lyndon nor in Esmond does the novelist appear in propria persona; Denis breaks into passages of reflection, but always in his own person, availing himself of the licence given to old age:- "Why do I make zigzag

journeys? 'Tis the privilege of old age to be garrulous, and its happiness to remember early days."[1] This remark is significant for it sums up Thackeray's predilection for the memoir form which gave him liberty to digress and to view the past in the tender light of memory.

In these few chapters of Denis Duval, Thackeray has given us quite a few characters, which must be added to his gallery of rare portraits. Denis Duval appears a more promising hero than Henry Esmond though he is also a bit too conventional. The talkative boy whose tongue occasionally earns him a box on the ear from his quick-tempered mother is more normal than the prematurely grave and retiring Henry, although the latter's lonely bringing up must have tended to produce unnatural gravity. Denis is more high-spirited and mischievous than Esmond, but his courage is as high, judging from his behaviour when Dr. Barnard and he are attacked by the highwayman. Both of them respond quickly and gratefully to kindness shown them, Esmond to that of Lady Castlewood and Denis to that of Dr. Barnard. And in the evening of their days their outlook is not dissimilar; both are evidently satisfied with the share of happiness they have gained in life. On the whole Denis would have been a less priggish and more human hero than Esmond and fitted better into his surroundings.

Too little is seen of Agnes to judge what Thackeray would have made of her, but one may surmise that she would have been another Lady Castlewood, especially if all her actions were to be coloured by the sentimentalising hue of Duval's reminiscences. His habitual method of describing her as "my little maid" reminds one of Esmond's "dear mistress." Such a sentimental passage as the

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1. Denis Duval P. 209.

following is indistinguishable from Esmond's rhapsodies over his dear Lady Castlewood:- "Did I love the sight of this dear white dove more than any other? Did it come sometimes fluttering to my heart? Ah! The old blood throbs there with the mere recollection. I feel - shall we say how many years younger, my dear? In fine, those little walks to the pigeon-house are among the sweetest of all our stores of memories."[1]

Madame Duval is one of the most striking characters in the book. To some extent she represents the Englishman's conventional idea of the Frenchwoman as voluble, managing and quick-tempered. But for all that she is an individual figure as well. She does not spare the rod in bringing up Denis, but her maternal instincts impel her to hasten to his protection, when he is imposed upon by the Rudges. Her belabouring of Miss Sukey and Old Rudge is the most comic episode in the book, although this boisterous form of humour is not common in Thackeray. Madame Duval may be a shrew, but she has the shrew's habit of putting her combative disposition to good use at times, as in her scorn for the neighbours' disapproval of her harbouring a Papist, and her spirited action in leaving the French Presbyterian Church on this account gives further proof, if any were needed, of her resolute will. On account of her indomitable spirit and her vagaries Madame Duval is the character in the book that radiates most life and energy.

M. de la Motte is in some ways an anomalous and unconvincing character, of sinister appearance - "he was a gambler, intriguer, duellist, profligate."[2] Yet his relations with Mme. de Saverne

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1. Denis Duval, P. 276.
2. Ibid., P. 159.

whom he accompanies to England and cares for in her madness are supposed to be innocent. Admittedly vicious men are capable of disinterested actions, but it is strange to find one bearing the brand of evil so patently as M. de la Motte caring for Mme. de Saverne and her child and spending so much of his time in this task, unless, of course, it suited his smuggling and espionage purposes to be in England. De La Motte is, and was probably intended to remain an enigmatic personage, although Thackeray makes him a more evil figure than one would infer from the account of the trial in the Annual Register for 1782. But he might have been made more credible if the novel had been completed.

Owing to its fragmentary character it is difficult to estimate the significance of Denis Duval as an historical novel and its value in comparison with Thackeray's other novels of the same kind. As a narrative it would have possessed more animation and movement than the story of the two young Americans. The historical events Thackeray proposed to incorporate in Denis Duval would have been more intrinsically interesting and possessed of greater historic importance than the incidents which appear in The Virginians. But the main interest of Denis Duval would have lain in its novelty, in the writer's adventure into a new territory. Hitherto he had been concerned with military actions; Denis Duval was to be a sailor and take an active part in naval conflicts with the French ships. His adventures might have provided an interesting comparison with the naval experiences described by Smollett in Roderick Random.

If it had been completed, Denis Duval would, one thinks, have had a more complex and romantic plot than Thackeray's other historical novels; it would have embraced more exciting incidents;

and it might have achieved a satisfactory balance between action and the description of manners. However, speculation about what Denis Duval might have been is, though interesting and inevitable, bound to assume something of the character of conjecture. But enough of it has been written to justify the belief that the lapse which appeared in The Virginians was but temporary and that death cut off Thackeray in the fullness of his powers as an historical novelist. Unfinished as it is, Denis Duval provides an appropriate conclusion to his work in the department of historical fiction.

VII.

Apart from the difference in setting Thackeray's historical novels (except Esmond in point of style) do not differ a great deal from The Newcomes, Pendennis and others contemporaneous with the time of writing. Each of his historical novels has the air of a tour de force as if Thackeray were attempting to write as one intellectually and spiritually akin with the eighteenth century, but born out of due season. Indeed it is significant that he should usually place the narrative in the mouth of one of the characters, thus making it easier to project himself into the eighteenth century environment. This intellectual affinity with the men of the previous century which appears in his satire, his realistic view of life, and his lack of illusions, made it possible for him to catch its atmosphere by subtle methods without recourse to the incorporation of a large amount of historical events. But these qualities also distinguish his contemporary novels. Thackeray did not find it necessary to make any considerable modification of his ordinary methods when he came to write

historical fiction. He describes the social life of an earlier period in much the same manner as he describes that of his own in Pendennis, but adds a tincture of historical incidents, and introduces a few characters to suggest the date. The historical elements are more or less embroidery, for the fortunes and relations of the characters are not greatly affected by them.

His method of construction is not essentially different from that he employed in contemporary novels. Whether the story is told in the first or the third person Thackeray's attitude is generally that of the writer of memoirs, looking back over a panorama of time, and claiming the liberty to write freely of those events and persons that seem most significant when seen in retrospect. There is no regular sequence of events, one giving rise to another, or springing from the action of character on character. One does not feel as if a remorseless fate were driving the characters along an inevitable course of action. Thackeray digresses, moves forwards and backwards in his narrative without caring much for achieving a connected order of events so long as he conveys an impression that time is passing and that it is moulding the dispositions of his characters, turning Esmond, for example, from a romantic boy, devoted to the beautiful Beatrix, into a man whom experience has taught to value unselfish love more than beauty. "Thackeray saw them (his novels) as broad expanses, stretches of territory, to be surveyed from edge to edge with a sweeping glance; he saw them as great general, typical impressions of life, populated by a swarm of people whose manners and adventures crowded into his memory. The landscape lay before him, his imagination wandered freely across it, backwards and forwards. The whole of it was in view at once, a single prospect,

out of which the story of Becky or Pendennis emerged and grew distinct while he watched. He wrote his novels with a mind full of a surge and wash of memories, the tenor of which was somehow to be conveyed in the outward form of a narrative. And though his novel complies with that form more or less, and a number of events are marshalled in order, yet its constant tendency is to escape and evade the restrictions of a scenic method, and to present the story in a continuous flow of leisurely, contemplative reminiscence."[1]

In the style he employed, Thackeray made a notable advance on the practice of his predecessors, especially in Esmond, by endeavouring to recapture the idiom of the age instead of using his own natural style in narrative and a generalised form of speech (not modern and yet not definitely belonging to any one period) in dialogue. Naturally it is impossible to do this except in the case of a novel the setting of which is not too far removed from the author's own time, but Thackeray was probably induced to try the experiment by his desire to approximate in his style to the love of good conversation. It was natural then that, when he was dealing with characters in an eighteenth century environment, he should try to reproduce their manner of speaking, instead of that of his own age. Consequently, apart from the intrinsic merit of his works, Thackeray is of great importance to the student of historical fiction on account of his experiments with the form.

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1. See Percy Lubbock's The Craft of Fiction (1932 edition) P. 93-94.

CHAPTER 111

THE HISTORICAL NOVELS OF CHARLES DICKENS

BARNABY RUDGE AND A TALE OF TWO CITIES[1]

I

Charles Dickens as a rule found sufficient material in the teeming life of contemporary London and England but in two works he went back to the previous century without, however, deserting his favourite milieu. Dickens's mind was not of the kind that is fascinated by the past like Scott's, nor was his knowledge of eighteenth century life and literature in any way comparable with that of Thackeray; he did not go to the trouble of laboriously studying the history of a period and reproducing its details with precision. His characters do not definitely belong to the period in which they are placed, but they are people of strongly marked individuality who would have been just as much or as little at home in Victorian London. Not that this criticism should be urged very strongly, for after all Dickens was dealing with events separated from his day merely by a couple of generations. Moreover, although Dickens had neither the knowledge nor the industry of an historical student, he was capable of grasping by intuition the prevailing sentiment and atmosphere of the time and environment, amidst which his characters played their part. Unlike Scott, who, (except in a few of his novels like The Antiquary (1816) and Redgauntlet(1824) and St Ronan's Well (1824) which were near his own time) drew his material from the history of distant periods, and wrote of people and happenings in remote times, describing manners and customs far removed from those of his own day, but,like Thackeray, Dickens took

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~~1. For synopses of them see Appendix A: Vl and Vll.~~

us with him into the midst of yesterday - the yesterday of history.

Dickens's attitude to history may be gathered from his Child's History of England (1854), though it has to be borne in mind that his treatment of the past in such a work is necessarily more elementary than in a novel designed for adult readers. But after one makes due allowance for the simplification demanded by the purpose of the work, A Child's History of England gives a fairly clear idea of Dickens's approach to the past. Few juvenile histories except Scott's Tales of a Grandfather (1828-31), ~~have been written which~~ possess so much animation of narrative. Dickens's capacity for narrative which appears in his account of the Gordon Riots and of the French Revolution is evinced equally strongly in A Child's History of England. The latter work shows that Dickens had a keen eye for the picturesque in history, and he included as many anecdotes as possible, whether they are well authenticated or not. Naturally a writer wanting to hold the interest of children is obliged to resort to the picturesque, but Dickens in any case shows no great maturity in his knowledge of the past and understanding of its political, religious and social forces. No doubt it was quite congenial for him to adopt the following treatment for the reign of Henry Vll: "As this reign was principally remarkable for two very curious impostures (Lambert Simnel and Perkin Warbeck) which have become famous in history, we will make those two stories its principal feature".[1]

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1. A Child's History of England (London: Chapman and Hall,1906) P185.

A Child's History of England shows that Dickens possessed very little historic sense, and that he freely introduced his personal opinions and judged the past according to Victorian standards. He wrote almost uniformly from the Liberal point of view and there is little originality in his interpretation of historical movements. Thus to him the deposition of James 11 and the accession of William of Orange and Mary was "England's great and glorious Revolution."[1] His dislike of intolerance and opposition, which is manifested in Barnaby Rudge, colours his view of the past. Naturally the persecuting policy of Queen Mary of England is vigorously condemned. Dickens has none of the sympathy for her that some historians, familiar with the contemporary belief in the efficacy of physical torture and aware that the Roman Catholics had no monopoly of persecution, have shown. "As BLOODY QUEEN MARY," he declares "this woman has become famous, and as BLOODY QUEEN MARY, she will ever be justly remembered with horror, and detestation in Great Britain."[2] Not that Dickens's censures are bestowed on ~~presenting~~ persecuting Roman Catholics alone. He ~~condemned~~ censured Henry Vlll for his execution of a great and good man like Sir Thomas More and for his whole policy of repudiating the papacy and yet persecuting Reformers. "One of the most atrocious features of this reign was that Henry the Eighth was always trimming between the reformed religion and the unreformed one; so that the more he quarrelled with the Pope, the more of his own subjects he roasted alive for not holding the Pope's opinions."[3]

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1. Ibid P. 324
2. Ibid P. 227
3. A Child's History of England P. 203

Dickens's sympathy with the oppressed and the victims of injustice is warmly displayed in his narrative of the Peasants' Revolt. For instance, of its leader, Wat Tyler, Dickens says that he was " a hard-working man, who had suffered much, and had been foully outraged; and it is probable that he was a man of a much higher nature and a much braver spirit than any of the parasites who exulted then, or have exulted since, over his defeat."[1]

In both Barnaby Rudge and A Tale of Two Cities the period is practically the same, but the background is very different. Barnaby Rudge has for its central historical incident the " No-Popery" riots in London led by Lord George Gordon, and A Tale of Two Cities is set amidst the throes of the French Revolution. A few days' rioting has given Lord George Gordon a place of dubious celebrity in English history, but compared with the French Revolution which affected the history of Europe this anti-Catholic agitation is a trifling incident. The one novel is a tale of one city - London; and the other, of two cities - London and Paris. The one is a tale of hot-headed youth, in which the mob rends the air with boyish shouts and rough laughter; and the other is a tale of sullen hate, in which there is no laughter, but the muffled roar of suffering men and women. Dickens was twenty-nine when he wrote Barnaby Rudge and forty-seven when he wrote A Tale of Two Cities. The one is twice as long as the other. The one is the work of eager young enthusiasm, the other, of mature thought and improved art.

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1. Ibid P. 136.

Although eighteen years elapsed between the writing of Dickens's two historical novels, each begins in the same year. Barnaby Rudge opens with the words, "In the year 1775 there stood upon the borders of Epping Forest,"[1] etc. The third paragraph of A Tale of Two Cities commences, "It was the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five."[2] It was the year when George III[3] was reigning in England, and Louis XVI[4] in France. By a curious coincidence both stories cover almost the same period of time. The concluding chapters of Barnaby Rudge deal with the death of Lord George Gordon in 1793; A Tale Of Two Cities ends with the death of Sydney Carton under the guillotine about the same year. Beyond this synchronisation no two stories could be more unlike. A Tale Of Two Cities, no doubt, considered as an historical novel, seems greater than Barnaby Rudge; because the tragedy of the French Revolution is greater than the tragi-comedy of the Gordon Riots. In other words, the French Revolution in its general significance was at least an outbreak of liberty, by comparison with an outbreak of bigotry.

II

The writing of Barnaby Rudge gave its author more trouble than any other of his books. He evidently planned it some time before he actually began to work on it, for in December, 1836, while the Pickwick Papers were still in course of publication, a new novel by the same author was announced under the title of Gabriel

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1. Barnaby Rudge (London: Chapman and Hall, 1906) P.1.
2. A Tale Of Two Cities (London: Chapman and Hall, 1906) P.1.
3. 1760-1820.
4. 1774-1792.

Vardon.[1] A quarrel with Bentley, his publisher, at the time added to the fact that he had undertaken the editorship of a monthly magazine and had begun the writing of Oliver Twist, had probably something to do with the postponement of the work. But by way of compromise with Bentley, for whom he had agreed in 1837 to write the novel within a very short time, he undertook to finish it by November of 1838. Yet he burdened himself anew with another task, compiling a Life of Grimaldi.[2] And in the same year, 1837, he made an agreement with Messrs Chapman and Hall to write a novel as successor to Pickwick, in consequence of which Nicholas Nickleby was begun early in 1838, and finished towards the end of the following year. Early in 1839 the story was again announced as immediately forthcoming still under the title of Gabriel Vardon. Nearly eighteen months later, the agreement with Bentley for its publication was cancelled. Probably Bentley saw no reason why Dickens should have added Nickleby, for another publisher, to his labours. It was arranged that Barnaby Rudge should appear in Bentley's Miscellany when Oliver Twist ended.

But this could not be done. "The conduct of three different

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1. The advertisement, as given by Kitton, runs:"A New Novel by Boz, by Charles Dickens,Esq., author of Sketches by Boz, The Pickwick Papers, etc. Three Volumes, post octavo." But no reference to it by name is given in Forster's Life Of Dickens. Yet Dickens tells us in a letter to Macrone that he agreed to accept the sum of £200 "for the first edition of a work of fiction (in three volumes of the usual type) to be written by me and to be entitled Gabriel Vardon, The Locksmith of London, of which not more than one thousand copies are to be printed." - see Kitton's Novels of Charles Dickens (London: 1897) PP. 71-72.

2. The Life of Grimaldi, the Clown, which Dickens had been arranging and editing for Bentley, 1838.

stories at the same time," Dickens wrote," and the production of a large portion of each, every month, would have been beyond Scott himself."[1] Again he wrote: "It is no fiction to say that at present I cannot write this tale." He complained of "slavery and drudgery on journeyman terms .... For six months Barnaby stands over. And but for you, it should stand over altogether."[2] So Dickens shook off the editorship of Miscellany, and bought back Oliver for £2250, which was advanced by Chapman and Hall, "to be deducted from the purchase-money of a book by me entitled Barnaby Rudge, of which two chapters are now in your hands."[3] At length the much-postponed story began to appear, Jan.22nd, 1841, in the pages of Dickens's weekly periodical,Master Humphrey's Clock,under the title of Barnaby Rudge, in which figures Gabriel Varden (not Vardon), a locksmith, which obviously indicates a connection with the romance first announced a few years previously.

After its first appearance, Dickens worked very hard on the story, as is indicated by the following quotations from his letters. "I didn't stir out yesterday," he wrote, "but sat and thought all day; not writing a line; not so much as the cross of a t or dot of an i. I imaged forth a good deal of 'Barnaby' by keeping my mind steadily on him...."[4] Again he wrote: "I have (it's four o'clock) done a very fair morning's work, at which I have sat very close, and been blessed besides with a clear view of the end of the volume;"[5] and later, "I am getting on very

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1. See his letter to Forster,Jan.1839.-Forster's Life,i.209.
2. Forster's Life of Dickens, i.210.
3. Ibid. To Chapman and Hall, July 2, 1840.
4. Ibid, i. 209.
5. Ibid.

slowly. I want to stick to the story, and the fear of committing myself, because of the impossibility of turning back or altering a syllable, makes it much harder than it looks..."[1] During the writing of the latter part of the story he was attacked by a serious illness, but he bore up gallantly and wrote (while still in his sick-room), "I hope I sha'n't leave off any more now, until I have finished 'Barnaby.'"[2] The story was completed on Oct.2nd., and published in volume form at the close of the same year.

The reception of the book was rather unfavourable. Students of the novelist's methods will find a close analysis of Barnaby Rudge in the criticisms of Edgar Allan Poe, who declared that Dickens had not thought of the riots when he began the book,but that they were dragged in afterwards; Dickens explains in the preface to Barnaby Rudge that the story was written because "no account of the Gordon Riots had been, to my knowledge, introduced into any work of fiction, and the subject presenting very extraordinary and remarkable features, I was led to project the tale."[3] Yet asserts Poe, "It is evident that they (The Riots) have no necessary connection with the story. The whole events of the drama would have proceeded as well without as with them. They have even the appearance of being forcibly introduced .... And the characters, at a certain point, are thrown forward for a period of five years ... for no more plausible reason than to afford an opportunity of describing the 'No-Popery' Riots."[4]

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1. Forster's Life of Dickens, i.216.
2. Ibid, i.219.
3. Dickens's Preface to Barnaby Rudge,VI.
4. The Literati,etc. By Edgar A.Poe. New York,1850. Reprinted in Poe's Works (London: Jarrod 1916)iv.38-39.

have consulted. If his investigation of the course of the rioting carried him further, he would have found reference to it in Boswell's Life of Johnson;[1] Horace Walpole's Letters[2]; Crabbe's Journals and Letters[3]; and Fox's Memorials and Correspondence.[4]

Dickens, much more so than Thackeray, must have felt the influence of Scott, when he came to write an historical novel, although the influence of Ainsworth and Lytton would have been more potent, because they were nearer to him.[1] Those scenes in which appear characters, like Sir John Chester, Lord George and the Haredales who belong to a class with whose manners and speech Dickens was not familiar betray the influence of corresponding scenes in Scott, although more staginess is evident in Dickens's handling of such situations. Dickens knew especially well The Heart of Midlothian (1818) which, like Barnaby Rudge, describes mobs and their behaviour.

Scott's description of the Porteous mob in The Heart of Midlothian offers an obvious parallel to the description of the Gordon Riots in Barnaby Rudge, and there are signs that Dickens had it in mind. True, there was a nominal leader in the case of the Gordon Riots, but the mob also assembles, carries out its purpose and disperses as if by a secret understanding without outward signs of organised leadership, as does the crowd which drags Porteous to the gallows.

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1. Ed.by Croker, P.648 f.
2. Ed. by P.Cunningham, vii, 337-402.
3. Ed. by his son, i.82-84.
4. Ed.by Lord J.Russel, i.224f.

1. For the sources of Barnaby Rudge see Appendix B:II P.403

"It was noticed at the time," writes Scott, "and afterwards more particularly remembered, that, while the mob were in the act of dispersing, several individuals were seen briefly passing from one place and one group of people to another, remaining long with none, but whispering for a long time with those who appeared to be declaiming most violently against the government."[1] Similarly in Barnaby Rudge, when the crowd is assembled outside the House of Parliament agents move about slipping papers into the hands of the people. Scott's account of the Porteous Riots is briefer and more concentrated than Dickens's description of the Gordon Riots, but the latter upheaval was more prolonged and serious than the Edinburgh mob's act of vengeance. Good as Scott's description of an angry mob is, it does not seem so vivid, so much written with an imaginative glow as Dickens's description of the London rioters, though some critics have held the contrary opinion. Scott writes rather like an historian with a strong imagination than as a novelist recreating the whole scene. Thus he has conscientiously to prepare the way by digressions on smuggling, the Edinburgh City Guard, and biographical comments on Captain Porteous, before he comes to the actual riot. Several times he interrupts his narrative to indicate that he is dealing with facts, as in the following passage: "Persons are yet living who remember to have heard from the mouths of ladies thus interrupted on their journey in the manner we have described, that they were escorted to their lodgings by the young men who stopped them[2] ...." If Scott's description of the mob's forcing the

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1. The Heart of Midlothian (Edinburgh:1818) PP.97-98.
2. Ibid., PP. 147-8.

Tolbooth is compared with Dickens's description of the burning of Newgate or the crowd's behaviour at the Maypole Inn, one thinks it will become apparent that Dickens can describe the behaviour of crowds with greater graphic power and dramatic force. For Dickens could draw bold, vivid, rapid sketches in what has been called later the impressionistic manner, suggesting an immense amount of detail by broad, sweeping strokes.

Dickens wrote Barnaby Rudge with a definite purpose, that is, an attack on two social evils of the eighteenth century - the severity of the penal code and the religious intolerance which though not characteristic of eighteenth century society on the whole, existed as a latent force which might be utilised by agitators. Besides, the Methodist revival had given a new impetus to Nonconformity and strengthened anti-Catholic feeling.

The latter part of the eighteenth century was a period in which offences that are now punished by brief terms of imprisonment were punished by death, a time lending itself with peculiar appropriateness to treatment by an author so strongly impressed with the desire to write with a purpose as was Dickens. No less than three hundred offences were punishable by death and new ones were frequently added to the list. Between 1660 and the death of George IV a hundred and eighty-seven new offences were added to the number involving capital punishment. Besides the laws regarding criminal offences were hopelessly inconsistent.[1] As Horace Walpole

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1. See England and the English in the Eighteenth Century by William Cannor Sydney (Edinburgh, John Grant, 1891). vol. ii., P.260.

very appropriately put it, "It is shocking to think what a shambles this country is grown!"[1]

The severity of the penal code is strongly suggested by Dennis, the hangman's allusions to the flourishing condition of his trade in those days. "'Did you ever, Muster Gasterford,'" whispered Dennis, with a horrible kind of admiration, such as that with which a cannibal might regard his intimate friend, when hungry,-"did you ever," - and here he drew still closer to his ear, and fenced his mouth with both his open hands -" see such a throat as his.' Do but cast your eye upon it. There's a neck for stretching, Muster Gasterford!"[2] This is, of course, only a professional joke, but it has due effect upon the reader. And Dickens remarks that Dennis's allusions "have their foundation in truth, not in the author's fancy. Any file of old newspapers or odd volumes of the Annual Register will prove this with terrible ease."[3] The severity of the penal code was the more forcefully illustrated by the case of Mary Jones. Dickens says, "The case of Mary Jones may speak the more emphatically for itself, I now adjoin it, as related by Sir William Meredith in a speech in Parliament, On Frequent Executions, made in 1777:- 'under this act,(the shop-lifting Act), one Mary Jones was executed, whose case I shall just mention; it was at the time when press-warrants were issued, on the alarm about the Falkland Islands. The woman's husband was pressed, their goods seized for some debts of his, and she, with two small children, turned into

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1. Walpole's Letters ed.by P.Cunningham (1891) ii,281.
2. See Barnaby Rudge chap LXIII for similar allusions.
3. See the preface to the first edition of Barnaby Rudge written in 1841, vii.

the streets a-begging. It is a circumstance not to be forgotten that she was very young (under nineteen), and most remarkably handsome. She went to a linen-draper's shop, took some coarse linen off the counter, and slipped it under her cloak; the shop-man saw her, and she laid it down; for this she was hanged. Her defence was (I have the trial in my pocket), that she had lived in credit, and wanted for nothing, till the press-gang came and stole her husband from her; but, since then, she had no bed to lie on; nothing to give her children to eat; and they were almost naked; and perhaps she might have done something wrong, for she hardly knew what she did. The parish officers testified the truth of this story; but it seems, there had been a good deal of shop-lifting about Ludgate; an example was thought necessary; and this woman was hanged for the comfort and satisfaction of shopkeepers in Ludgate Street. When brought to receive sentence, she behaved in such a frantic manner, as proved her mind to be in a distracted and desponding state, and the child was sucking at her breast when she set out for Tyburn.'"[1] This case clearly shows how severe were the laws in punishing slight offences against the sacredness of property. But such a case was not very uncommon.

By 1841 a considerable number of reforms in criminal legislation had taken place. Sir Samuel Romilly and Sir James Mackintosh had managed to secure the deletion of many minor offences from the list of capital crimes. Still further improvements had

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1. See the preface to the first edition of Barnaby Rudge written in 1841, vii-viii.

resulted from the Criminal Law Commission of 1833, but it was 1845 before the death penalty was limited to convictions for murder and high treason.

The attack in Barnaby Rudge on the severity of the criminal law is accompanied by an attack on the manner in which the punishments imposed by that law were carried out. The picture of the scene at the execution of Dennis and Hugh is meant to hold up to general execration the practice of having executions carried out in public.[1] Nor is the protest embodied in Barnaby Rudge the only one which Dickens made against the practice. Forster, in his Life of Dickens, records that in 1848 he and his friend "saw the Mannings executed on the walk of Horsemonger Gaol; and with the letter which Dickens wrote next day to The Times descriptive of what we had witnessed on that memorable morning there began an active agitation against public executions which never ceased until the salutary change was effected which has worked so well."[2] As a result of this agitation, public executions were prohibited by Act of Parliament in 1868.

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1. Prisoners were executed on Tyburn Hill in Public, or on some occasion, when it was especially desired to enforce an example, as close as possible to the scene of guilt. Those who were punished for participation in the Gordon Riots of 1780 were in the various parts of the city where the crimes were committed - see Alfred Trumble's In Jail With Charles Dickens, P.5.

2. Forster's Life of Charles Dickens, vol.ii., chap.XVI. The letter referred to contained the following passage: "When the sun rose brightly - as it did - it gilded thousands upon thousands of upturned faces so inexpressibly odious in their brutal mirth or callousness that a man had cause to feel ashamed of the shape he wore, and to shrink from himself, as fashioned in the image of the devil....I am solemnly convinced that nothing that ingenuity could devise to be done in this in the same compass of time, could work such ruin as one public execution; and I stand amazed and appalled by the wickedness it exhibits."

By the time Dickens wrote greater religious tolerance prevailed, but still sectarian antipathy was far from uncommon, and by exposing the dreadful consequences it had involved in the previous century Dickens desired to make such intolerance seem absurd and irrational. Dickens was himself a Liberal in outlook and abhorred narrow-minded sectarianism. His enthusiasm for freedom of thought and religious opinion led him to deplore the excesses of rabid Protestantism, but he had no particular admiration for Roman Catholicism either. Kingsley shared the Liberal position in his attacks on the obscurantist, repressive attitude of Roman Catholics who insisted too strongly on orthodoxy and ecclesiastical authority. But he was more of a Protestant partisan than Dickens who was actuated mostly by genuine attachment to the ideal of religious toleration. In his preface Dickens indicates that the outrages perpetrated by the rioting mob must be enough in themselves to warn people of the evils of bitter sectarian hatred. "It is unnecessary to say," he writes,"that those shameful tumults, while they reflect indelible disgrace upon the time in which they occurred, and all who had act or part in them, teach a good lesson. That what we falsely called a religious cry is easily raised by men who have no religion, and who in their daily practice set at nought the commonest principles of right and wrong; that it is begotten of intolerance and persecution; that it is senseless, besotted, inveterate and unmerciful; all History teaches us. But perhaps we do not know it in our hearts too well, to profit by even so humble an example as the 'No-Popery' riots of Seventeen Hundred

and eighty."[1]

Accordingly Dickens does not insist on pointing his moral too frequently. He allows the events to speak for themselves. Yet the lesson he appears to include is not so much that religious intolerance is a bad thing in itself because it is uncharitable and contrary to Christian ethics as that it is absurd because it gives knaves an opportunity of exploiting sectarian passions for their own end. The Gordon Riots, according to Dickens, were engineered by scoundrels who made use of a sincere but unbalanced person like Lord George Gordon. Dickens explicitly denies that the Riots were an expression of Protestant zeal or even sincere hatred of Catholicism. "If all zealous Protestants had been publicly urged to join an association for the avowed purpose of singing a hymn or two occasionally, and hearing some indifferent speeches made, and ultimately of petitioning Parliament not to pass an act for abolishing the penal laws against Roman Catholic priests; the penalty of perpetual imprisonment denounced against those who educated children in that persuasion, and the disqualification of all members of the Romish church to inherit real property in the United Kingdom by right of purchase or descent,- matters so far removed from the business and bosoms of the mass, might perhaps have called together a hundred people."[2] But the secret methods of the instigators of the Riots and the rumours about the wicked plots of the Papists they spread abroad rallied a large number of the ignorant and credulous. Dickens's attitude then to

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1. See the Preface to Barnaby Rudge, vi -vii.
2. Barnaby Rudge, p.256.

religious controversy is that of a man who is above the battle, who preaches religious tolerance not so much on religious grounds, as because it is only common sense. Barnaby Rudge is meant to warn his readers against lending any countenance to movements animated by sectarian hatred, because they merely serve as a mantle for "the worst passions of the worst men."[1]

In the preface Dickens indicates that he follows the course of the Gordon Riots pretty closely in Barnaby Rudge. The political disabilities of the Roman Catholics were partly removed by a Bill introduced by Sir George Savile which was passed in 1778. An attempt in the following year to pass the Catholic Relief Bill provoked the Gordon Riots.[2] Lord George Gordon had suddenly come into prominence by his association with the successful Scottish resistance to proposals to relieve Catholics in Scotland. He became President of the Protestant Association and undertook to present a petition to Parliament against the Catholic Relief Bill.

In Chapter XLIX Dickens vividly describes the mob which gathered outside the House of Commons, the inflammatory speeches made from time to time by their leader, the adjournment of the debate, the consequent anger of the mob, their dispersal on the appearance of troops, and their re-assembling the same night to sack some Catholic chapels. Dickens, however, gives the impression that the rioting was continuous, and that next day the mob

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1. Barnaby Rudge , p.312.
2. "Just as he had come upon the reader, he had come, from time to time, upon the public, and been forgotten in a day; as suddenly as he appears in these pages, after a blank of five long years did he and his proceedings begin to force themselves, about this period, upon the notice of thousands of people .... who had scarcely ever thought of him before."(Barnaby Rudge, Chap.XXXVII).

reassembled openly and set about the work of plunder. Actually the rioting was suspended for a few days, until the debate was resumed in the Commons on the 6th and a large crowd again assembled outside. This episode is not described, nor the uncontrollable fury of the mob, when the debate was again adjourned. But Dickens does narrate very graphically the burning of Newgate, the freeing of the inmates who swelled the ranks of the rioters, and the destruction of the houses of Lord Mansfield and Sir John Fielding. Nor is there any exaggeration in the violent scenes of plundering he describes. A large amount of property was destroyed, and the number of fires caused by the rioters made Horace Walpole write,"who ever saw a capital of the size of London in flames in more than a dozen places, and its own inhabitants rioting in every barbarity?"[1] About 300 people were killed in the riots, 29 of the ring-leaders executed later, and many others imprisoned.

The Gordon Riots, according to Dickens, was not so much an outbreak of religious zeal as the seizing of an opportunity for plundering by criminals and other unruly persons. No doubt a considerable number of the latter class did take part in the rioting, but Dickens appears to minimise unduly the effect of religious prejudice in producing this outburst of popular anger, which was surely a mistake in view of his propagandist purpose - to expose intolerance. It is a fanatical hatred of the opposing sect that usually provides the moving power in an agitation like the Gordon Riots, and, although some of the deeds of the rioters may have been determined upon on the spur of the moment, the

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1. Walpole's Letters ed. by Peter Cunningham,vii.396.

course of the Riots does show that there was that common understanding among the participants that proceeds from organisation.

One may well cherish some doubts whether Dickens has described accurately the character of Lord George Gordon and the part he played in the Riots, which deservedly or not, have been called after him. Lord George was certainly unbalanced to a degree that bordered on insanity, as the vagaries of his later career, including his conversion to the Jewish faith, showed; and in modern times he would probably be placed under kindly restraint in a mental home. But he does not appear to have been so much of a fool as Dickens represents him, a poor, deluded creature, sincere himself but an easy prey to the flattery of hypocrites. On the contrary Lord George appears to have been a man of violent opinions continually busied with political scheming. He had the cunning of the lunatic rather than the simplicity and gullibility of the idiot. Dickens misrepresents Lord George Gordon by lavishing too much unnecessary pity and kindly sentimentalism on him.[1] After the beginning of the Riots Lord George rather fades out of the picture in Barnaby Rudge. He himself denied that he had approved or encouraged the violent actions of his followers. He may have intended to lead a

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1. "He must have been at heart," writes Dickens,"a kind man, a lover of the despised and rejected after his own fashion .... He always spoke on the people's side, and tried against his muddled brains to expose the progligacy of both parties. He never got anything by his madness and never sought it. The wildest and most raging attacks of the time allow him these merits: and not to let him have 'em in their full extent, remembering in what a (politically) wicked time he lived, would lie upon my conscience heavily."- See Forster's Life of Dickens, i.216-7.

constitutional resistance, such as had been successful in Scotland, or he may have been astute enough to safeguard himself from the consequences of agitation. At any rate he made a timely offer of his services to the King, largely on account of which he was acquitted at his subsequent trial, after a period of imprisonment in the Tower.

Such is an outline of the movement which Dickens utilised as background for a portion of the romance. The scenes of riot attendant upon Lord George Gordon's fanatical agitation are the scenes through which the afflicted Barnaby and his poor mother, the sturdy old locksmith Varden and his pretty daughter Dolly, the Willets, the Hardales, and the Chesters play their romantic and tragic parts.

Almost all the characters who figure prominently in the narrative are in some way associated with the Maypole Inn, the original of which is the "King's Head" at Chigwell on the border of Epping Forest.[1] The inn occupies an important place in the novel. It is the actual pivot upon which the whole story revolves; and scene after scene is enacted either in it or near by. The novel opens with John Willet, sitting in his old seat in the chimney-corner surrounded by the group of regular customers; Sir John Chester has his momentous interview with Geoffrey Haredale in the best apartment; Lord George Gordon, John Orneby and Mr Gashford on their "No-Popery" mission, put up for the night in the Maypole. And passing over the frequent visit of such characters as Mr., Mrs. and Miss Varden, Miss Hare-

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1. For a short account of the historic Maypole of Charles Dickens in Barnaby Rudge, see "the King's Head, Chigwell," in Topographical Tracts 1748-1912 (London: 1912), P.6.

dale and others, we reach the stage in the story when the rioters arrive at the inn on their way to burn the Warren in the neighbourhood. Finally the story ends with a delightful picture of young Joe Willet comfortably settled there with Dolly his wife.

The plot of Barnaby Rudge as is the case with most of Dickens's earlier novels is complicated but loosely constructed. It bears evident marks of serial publication. The writer of a serial is obliged to make an effort to maintain interest at a high pitch and to provide a minor crisis at the end of each instalment which will excite suspense as to its solution in the next instalment. Barnaby Rudge has these marks of the serial and on this account it lacks the unity of design and concentration of interest essential in a well-finished work of art. At least, any reader can notice that the story of Barnaby Rudge consists of two distinct parts - a domestic drama and an historical incident, and that the two parts are by no means fused. A shifting of interest takes place, and the reader's attention which is concentrated on a domestic drama is soon diverted to far wider issues. The main plot presumably consists of the murder of Mr. Haredale's brother by Barnaby's father, the murderer's flight, and his experiences until he is finally arrested. But many things distract one from the main plot. The love affairs of pretty Dolly Varden and of Emma Haredale, the fate of the neglected, brutalized Hugh, the doings of Sim Tappertit and his noble band of apprentices, the meetings of the solemn merry-makers at the Maypole - all these claim the reader's attention, but they have little connection with the main plot and almost as little with each other. What is worse, when the author is

fervently describing the riotous mass-movement, he seems to forget his original plot and to lose sight of his principal characters. The original problems of the book are only solved in a perfunctory way at the close. If we compare the similar treatment of the historical movement in A Tale of Two Cities, the defect is discernible at once. It is precisely because Dickens kept a closer hold upon his story and fixed his eyes more steadily upon his principal characters and his main issues - precisely because he did not lose himself in the setting of his novel, that A Tale of Two Cities is far better constructed than Barnaby Rudge.

Moreover, what seems a real weakness of Barnaby Rudge, considered as an historical novel, is the fact that, as in Thackeray's historical novels, the central historical event, the Gordon Riots, does not influence in any appreciable degree the fortunes of the main characters. True, they are all more or less involved in the Riots, and some of them suffer in person and property, but it is a passing storm, lurid and frightening enough as long as it lasts, but merely causing some damage which is soon repaired. None of the characters feel that the Riots have left an indelible mark on them; that they have gone through experiences which have changed the course of their lives. Edward Chester would have married Miss Haredale, Joe Willet would have returned to wed Dolly Varden, and the mystery of Reuben Haredale's murder would have been cleared up, even if the Riots had never occurred. One imagines that Scott, if he had written on this theme, would have given the Gordon Riots a more vital and effective bearing on the story. He would have made more of the hostility between Catholics and Protestants, and the principal cause of the separation

of Edward Chester and Emma Haredale would have been owing to religious differences. If the relations of the characters had been coloured by their denominational attachments, the outbreak of the Gordon Riots would have had an important effect on the story. But though Dickens makes Mr. Haredale a Catholic and thus exposed to the fury of the rioting mob, his Catholicism does not affect his relations with Protestants, like Joe Willet and Gabriel Varden. Dickens in Barnaby Rudge was not really able to conceive the lives of his characters acted out in the facts of a historical period. He was interested in an isolated and striking historical episode - not in human lives conditioned by the past.

As for the characters, Barnaby Rudge himself, weak in intellect but strong and brave in spirit, is a picturesque but rather theatrical figure, and it seems to have been merely on this account that Dickens selected such a hero. It has been said that Barnaby's prototype was a pedlar of eccentric habits, named Walter de Brisac, who lived at Chatham.[1] But there is a possibility that this character may have been inspired by a recollection of Madge Wildfire. Dickens probably drew him as a parallel or male counterpart but he is not nearly so successful. To call him an idiot, is certainly incorrect and unjustified. An idiot usually suffers from mental deficiency which reduces his interest, but Barnaby's weakness is like that of Madge Wildfire's, "a morbid development of the imagination, at the expense of the reasoning power."[2] So he is not so much an idiot as a lunatic. Indeed

1. The first time that Dickens saw him he was dressed in a manner suggestive of a remote period, and was wearing the same garments, when he died at the age of 68, in wretchedness and destitution.- see Wm.Ellison: Charles Dickens,p.42.

2. Gissing: Introduction to Barnaby Rudge, XVII.

his lunatic character is carefully brought out and his fantastic imagination is finely expressed. But one feels instinctively that the author was unwise in choosing such a lunatic character as the hero of a novel. Not that lunacy cannot be the subject of art: the hero of Dostoievsky's Idiot, though not so crazy as Barnaby Rudge, is weak-minded and subject to fits of epilepsy. Lear, again, is one of the sublimest of Shakespeare's tragic heroes. The Fool in Lear is a pathetic character; Hamlet feigns madness and Ophelia's loss of understanding owing to a succession of shocks results in a moving scene in Hamlet. Yet none of these is a congenital lunatic or an idiot.

In point of fact, however, Barnaby is largely a titular hero, although the intense sympathy which attracted the author towards all who were handicapped or down-trodden in the race of life gives a special tenderness to the picture. Some of the finest passages in the book are those in which Barnaby's fancies are expressed, and Barnaby's pure unalloyed devotion to his ideal of right is compared with the mixed motives actuating even the best of the reasoning men and women who surround him. It is a clear, soft-tinted and tender sketch, standing out in pleasant relief against the dark background of the animal coarseness of Dennis the hangman.

The characterisation of the unfortunate, friendless, half-savage Hugh, the neglected bastard of Sir John Chester, and an outcast who perished on the gallows, is, artistically speaking, a very strong piece of work. When he was an ostler at the Maypole, this reckless ruffian, fierce, ignorant, and violent, has a genuine

interest for us. And at the moment of his condemnation, he shows his finest quality- pity for his innocent companion Barnaby, who is waiting with him and Dennis. In a few most pathetic words he describes Barnaby to the governor of the jail and others, while appealing, on his behalf, to the fact of his insanity. In short, the character of Hugh is well conceived, well depicted.

Mr. Dennis is the first of those coarse and hardened ruffians, with two vile faces under one frowsy hood. The grim humour which is exhibited in the presentment of the hangman is characteristic of Dickens and recalls Jerry[1] in A Tale of Two Cities, Quilp in The Old Curiosity Shop, and the Squeers family in Nicholas Nickleby. And in Dennis there is a suggestion as in all Dickens of Smollett's novels and of Hogarth's drawings. And the portrait of the hangman is drawn with a strong insistence on ugliness and a sardonic humour which are akin to the spirit of the drawings of Gilray and Rowlandson.

Sir John Chester who is, indeed, "the evil genius of the story,"[2] is rather a stagey villain, and in fact is as unconvincing as most of Dickens's representations of characters belonging to the upper classes. This character was suggested by the person of Lord Chesterfield, whom he superficially resembles, but who was more selfish and egoistic than malevolent and cruel. In fact, as Dr.Baker remarks, Sir John Chester is "an inept caricature

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1. The humour of Jerry's remarks on the barbarity of quartering a criminal, because it spoils a 'subject,' are exactly in the manner of Dennis, the hangman.

2. A.S.G. Canning: Dickson's Studies in Six Novels, p.81.

of his half-namesake, the famous Lord Chesterfield, who not merely belonged to an order of minds that Dickens was unable to comprehend, but was the negation of everything that Dickens cherished, in other words, was his Satan."[1] Under a bland, smooth, pleasing exterior, polished and refined to an almost extravagant degree, frivolous in taste, and luxurious, though not apparently dissipated in habits, there lurks a most malevolent spirit and a thoroughly hard heart. He is a prototype of a later character, the Marquis in A Tale of Two Cities. In Barnaby Rudge he presents a striking contrast to Mr. Haredale on one side, and Gabriel Varden on the other. The scenes in which he is brought in contact with one or the other of them are particularly effective. Sir John Chester is, moreover, the central figure of the intrigue. By his instigation, Hugh, Sim, Dennis, Stagg are all involved in the midst of the rioting. Meanwhile, he preserves the most perfect self-control towards every one, except Mr. Haredale, whom he pursues with the most deadly rancour throughout.

Sir John Chester shares the position of villain of the story, with Gashford, the secretary of Lord George. It is possible that they were suggested by the characters of Leicester and Varney in Kenilworth. Leicester certainly is not a villain like Sir John Chester, but the relation between Varney and him parallel those between Gashford and Sir John Chester. Both are calculating schemers who manage to influence men of simple minds and gain their ends by violent deeds, if necessary, while carefully shielding themselves. They are dissembling villains of the same pattern

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1. The History of the English Novel, vol.vii.(1936) p.264.

as Lord Dalgarno in Scott's Fortunes of Nigel (1822). Sir John Chester, however, is more thorough-going in his self-seeking than Gashford, and is the abler, more polished villain. Gashford's plans fail and he is crushed by the forces he has released, because he has not in the same degree Sir John's skill in shielding himself. He is ratheraless subtle and more conventional type of the canting, hypocritical villain.

We may observe, however, generally that the flesh-and-blood interest of the story is to be found in the locksmith's household and the bar of the Maypole. Fat John Willet, landlord of the Maypole Inn, is a typically Dickensian character. He would solemnly sit in his accustomed place with expressionless gaze fixed on the eternal copper boiler. And "before he had got his ideas into focus, he had stared at the plebeian utensil quite twenty minutes."[1] Dickens seems at his best while depicting the immeasurable stupidity and monumental self-esteem of such an innkeeper as old John Willet. Such a portrait, a little overdone, perhaps, depends for its vitality upon an observation which is humorously sympathetic.

Hearty Gabriel Varden is another Dickensian character, the most honest, manly and genial character in the whole book; the best type of his class completely realized. His constant good-humour under the nagging of his wife, who is aided and abetted by Miss Miggs, excites the reader's hearty respect. The generous support he gives to his old sweetheart, Mary Rudge, his magnanimous treatment of his misguided apprentice, Sim Tappertit, and his undaunted bearing when death at the hands of the rioters

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1. Barnaby Rudge, p.8.

is imminent - all these situations reveal his sterling honesty of character and innate courage.

The buxom wife, Mrs. Varden,"with a plaguing tongue that makes every one wretched whom her kindly disposition would desire to make happy,"[1] is a truthful picture of a rather common type. Often as Dickens has drawn for us the insupportable matron, he never did so more faithfully than in this instance. But her conversion does violence to the reader's sense of probability. She reminds us of Mrs. Wilfer in Our Mutual Friend as a lady of what is commonly called an uncertain temper.

The good-hearted plump little Dolly Varden is probably a better and more attractive character than other Dickensian heroines like Kate Nickleby, Miss Bray, or little Nell, because she is more natural. Dolly is undoubtedly a charming and attractive figure to the admirers of her time and to the reader of any time; but she has been too seriously judged by some critics who point out that she is a typical young girl of the time, a charming coquette, frivolous and brainless, displaying also the heartless indifference characteristic of the coquette. True, Dolly is frivolous enough, but beneath the light-hearted manner she shows signs of a good temper which she must have inherited from her father. Indeed, she is rather a spoilt girl at first; but she is gradually improved by sorrow and trials.

As Dolly Varden is certainly the heroine, so Joe Willet may be regarded in some ways as the hero of the novel. Joe is almost unique among Dickens's characters as a type of the honest, unimaginative English yeoman, although a comic parallel may be found in Mrs. Squeere's admirer, John Brodie, in Nicholas

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1. Forster: Life of Dickens, i.222

Nickleby. He has no peculiarities, unlike many of Dickens's personages, but impresses one by his sterling honesty and his unaffected geniality. George Eliot's hero, Adam Bede, though he is not quite so prepossessing a fellow as Joe Willet, belongs to the same class; while another example of the honest, faithful yeoman may be found in Hardy's Far From The Madding Crowd (1874) in the person of the shepherd, Gabriel Oke, whose constancy to his pretty, impetuous mistress Bathsheba never wavers. But Adam and Joe are both equally manly, straightforward, and honest; yet Adam's character is more disciplined, and his merits seem to proceed less from natural goodness of heart than from moral effort. Joe Willet is a more spontaneous and natural creation than Adam Bede who character is more complex than a superficial reading suggests. Adam's strong will suppresses a natural tendency to violent expression of his emotions and underneath the calm of his demeanour one senses the presence of volcanic strength. He is more nobly conceived than Joe Willet, but he does not appear so natural a figure. A character of this kind is difficult to depict, for there is a danger of an honest, straightforward person appearing either obtuse or simple, as Thackeray's Dobbin does, for instance. But there is no suggestion of either stupidity or simplicity (of the wrong kind) in the case of Joe Willet, who behaves himself admirably during his courtship of Dolly, showing real manliness under her coquettish ill-usage. Perhaps the feats which he performs in the Gordon Riots, especially that of rescuing the locksmith before the gate of Newgate, try our sense of probability somewhat severely, but he becomes his old familiar self again when he settles down at the Maypole.

To conclude, we may say that Barnaby Rudge is an historical novel because it embodies avivid and detailed account of a spectacular historical episode. It is not a recreation of an historical period as are the novels of Scott, who fuses into a narrative a series of actual, with a mixture of fictitious events and introduces a considerable number of historical personages. Nor does Dickens Attempt to revive the social life of his period as Thackeray habitually does in his historical novels. He simply constructs a plot of the kind he usually employs, with several love interests and a strong tincture of melodrama and incorporates an account of the Gordon Riots which follows pretty closely the actual course of this outbreak of religious rioting. As Barnaby Rudge, has never been considered one of Dickens's best novels, so it can scarcely be assigned to a very high place as an historical novel,, not so,much on account of the writer's limited historical knowledge, the comparative insignificance of the Gordon Riots, the lack of historical personages, and the failure to fuse the actual and the fictitious, but simply because its historical complexion neither makes nor mars the novel. If one does like Barnaby Rudge, one likes it for its humour and geniality (principally displayed in the case of John Willet and his friends and the honest locksmith Gabriel Varden) and for its graphic descriptions of mobs and their behaviour, but its historical aspect scarcely seems to matter. In Esmond or in Quentin Durward the historical background, political or social, is woven into the very texture of the novel and one cannot ignore them. Their appreciation requires some interest in history and they are likely to appeal most to those capable of judging the

success with which historical colouring is used. But Dickens passes the historical incidents through his own imagination and reproduces them in such a form that one is apt to lose sight of their historicity.

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It seems that something of the same trouble and delay which marked the writing of the frequently postponed story of Barnaby Rudge accompanied the production of A Tale of Two Cities. The idea of the story first presented itself to Dickens's mind within a few weeks of the conclusion of Little Dorrit (1855-57), but it was to languish a long time before it ripened into performance. It was characteristic of Dickens that the first notion should have come to him in an hour of acute mental excitement, for usually with him one train of ideas set fire to another. Just as A Christmas Carol (1843) was conceived in the rush and bustle of a public meeting at Manchester, so A Tale of Two Cities had its origin in the midst of a dramatic entertainment. In the preface affixed to the first edition of A Tale of Two Cities Dickens says that he conceived the main idea while acting with his children and friends in the summer of 1857 in Wilkie Collins's drama of The Frozen Deep. Dickens took the part of Richard Wardour, who, on an Arctic expedition, finds himself left alone, with Frank Alderley, his successful rival for the love of Clara Burnham. He is tempted to murder him, but the play ends with Wardour's restoration of Frank to Clara, who has come to Newfoundland seeking news of the expedition. In the act of renunciation, he has won. the greatest of all conquests - the conquest of himself. And he had died in the moment of

victory. This is the plot which gave Dickens the idea for A Tale of Two Cities, but he changed the scene to the time of the French Revolution, having recently come under the spell of Carlyle's history. But according to Forster it was then nothing more than a vague fancy,[1] and the sadness and trouble Dickens experienced in the winter of that year were not favourable to its growth. In the end of January, 1858, he reverted to the notion, partly because work at a story would be a relief from the worry caused by the strained relations with his wife which ended in separation.

Dickens's first intention was to write this novel upon a plan proposed in his manuscript-book: "How as to a story in two periods - with a lapse of time between, like a French drama?"[2] The query is followed by a list of titles. Before deciding upon its present title Dickens had considered calling the story One of these Days, Buried Alive, The Thread of Gold, or The Doctor of Beauvais. At length he believed that he had "got exactly the name for the story that is wanted; exactly what will fit the opening to a T. A Tale of Two Cities."[3] This matter finally settled, the story grew rapidly under its author's hand. It began to appear in the first weekly number of All the Year Round at the end of April, 1859, and was finished and published in volume form before the close of the same year. By the time he had finished the story Dickens was in love with his work, and intimated to M. Regnier that he hoped it was the best he had written; and to Wilkie Collins, "It has greatly moved and excited me in the doing, and Heaven knows I have done my best and believed in it."[4]

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1. Dickens's notes and correspondence show that he had been pondering over this new tale for a year or so.
2. Forster's Life etc. iii. 321.
3. Ibid iii. 322.
4. Op. cit. Kitton: The novels of Dickens P.181.

Dickens was gratified by an expression of appreciation from Lord Lytton, who discussed with him certain points in the plot. But what gave him especial pleasure was a note he received from Carlyle. Dickens must have been greatly gratified by the praise of one who knew the period so well and was besides not very lavish in his praise of contemporary writers.

Of the actual " two cities" of which he wrote, Dickens certainly had close personal knowledge. He knew London perhaps better than any writer before or since his time, has known it; and in the case of Paris, his two long visits[1] to the city had made him acquainted with it. He wandered through its streets as he did in London, penetrating into side-streets and out-of-the-way corners, thus gaining a much more intimate knowledge of Parisian life than the ordinary tourist who seldom strays from the beaten path; and of the knowledge so acquired he makes good use in his Tale of Two Cities.[2]

[As for the source of Dickens's historical information, one incident shows it clearly enough. Charles Dickens the younger tells us, " while he (his father) was engaged in the preliminary work on the Tale of Two Cities, he asked Carlyle for the loan of a few such authorities as might be useful for his purpose, and promptly received from the historian of the French Revolution two cart-loads of books."[2] Whether he made use of the whole of this well-meant loan, we do not know; but it is evident from Dickens's letters and personal records that he greatly admired the writings of Carlyle, and had an especially high regard for The French Revolution, which he declared was the book of all others which

1. One in 1846; one, 1857.

~~2. Introduction to A Tale of Two Cities edited by Charles Dickens the younger (London); Mac, 1908)xx.~~

2. For its sources see Appendix B:II. P.404

he read perpetually and of which he was never tired. He always found himself turning away from the volumes of references, and re-reading with increased wonder that marvellous ' production'. So that his French Revolution is not entirely or exactly the actual French Revolution but the French Revolution of Carlyle. Indeed, Carlyle's French Revolution determined the construction of A Tale of Two Cities to an incalculable extent. A study of the former work is necessary to the full appreciation of the latter. So stimulating did Dickens find the tone and spirit of Carlyle's French Revolution that it prompted him to write a novel, more dramatic and pulsating with action than any of his earlier productions.

" It has been of my purpose, " Dickens tells us, " to add something to the popular and picturesque means of understanding that terrible time, though no one has hope to add anything to the philosophy of Mr Carlyle's wonderful book."[1] In A Tale of Two Cities Dickens not only adopted Carlyle's theory of the Revolution, but occasionally caught Carlyle's style of writing. The opening paragraphs and the descriptions of Saint Antoine are strongly reminiscent of Carlyle's method, while the verbless sentences, the compound words, and the harsh locutions strongly suggest Carlyle's manner. And Dickens's picture, as a recent biographer of his says, " is coloured just as Carlyle's picture is all smoke and fury, like a huge genie emerging from a bottle."[2] If Dickens caught the spirit of the French Revolution from Carlyle

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1.See the author's Preface to A Tale of Two Cities i.

2.Stephen: Charles Dickens, His Life and Work (London: Peter Davies 1933) P. 198.

he also derived a false estimate of the causes of the Revolution from him. The following passage from the Introduction to an edition of Carlyle's French Revolution might equally well be applied to Dickens's conception of the causes of the Revolution. " First then, Carlyle appears to have gone wrong in accepting without enquiry the ' hunger-and-misery' view of the Ancien Regime. In giving full scope to his imagination on this point he has given credence to several untenable theories, e.g., that the clergy were everywhere contemptible and worthless and that the faith was a dead letter, that the immense majority of the Noblesse were utterly worthless and quite indifferent to the sufferings of the lower classes, that there was no enlightened middle class. These views, made the groundwork of his subject, lead him to the conclusion (which by the way has no logical connection with these premises) that the whole system of society and government was so utterly bad that nothing short of a complete social upheaval could do any good to France. Then he goes further and, as if to justify the ways of God to man, he deliberately associates the whole French people with himself in desiring the social upheaval in its extreme form."[1]

Where Dickens is nearer to truth than Carlyle, Mr Chesterton points out,[2] is in his realisation that the French Revolution was fundamentally a movement of optimism. In a sense it is true that revolutionaries, though pessimistic enough about one thing as they are, are optimistic about the good results of the revolution they desired. At the beginning a revolution may be characterised by a spirit of optimism but this often degenerates into fanaticism in

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1. The French Revolution (Methuen's Standard Library) edited with an introduction by C.R.L. Fletcher (London, 1902) XLX.
2. G.K. Chesterton: Criticism and Appreciations of Charles Dickens's Works (London: J.M. Dent, 1911) PP. 194-195.

which there is little of the element of optimism and much of pride, self-will, and the lust for power over others. While Mr Chesterton takes too genial a view of the bloody realities of revolution, and ignores the fact that striking will-power and not cheery optimism have been characteristic of Levin and Stalin, the revolutionaries of our day, he is correct in his assertion that Dickens was temperamentally more in accord with the French revolutionaries than was Carlyle. Dickens was spiritually a descendant of the French Revolution; he believed in liberty, in equality, and in fraternity and was an ardent social reformer, Carlyle, on the other hand, had no naive belief in reform and was inclined to be sceptical of the values of the Revolution. Hence it is easy to see that Dickens was better fitted temperamentally to understand the hopes and passions that stirred the Parisian mob. Carlyle was further handicapped by his belief that history was made by the actions and influence of prominent individuals. Whereas Dickens was able to grasp the states of popular feeling by intuition. He had a faith in the love of the common man and in democracy. Nevertheless, it has to be recognised that but for the stimulus of Carlyle's work, A Tale of Two Cities would never have been written, though its merits as an historical novel proceed from Dickens's own transforming genius.

The title of the novel is an accurate index to its contents, for it is concerned with two very different cities, London and Paris, before and at the time of the French Revolution. In the English parts Dickens attempts, in a way that is unusual for him

but very necessary for the historical novel, to describe the condition of England under George III. with its roads muddy and uneven, the stage-coaches on which were still in danger of being held up by highwaymen. His account of an old Bailey trial serves to indicate how justice was administered, or mal-administered, and besides he revives the congested, drunken and coarse life of London in the eighteenth century. In the description of the trial his reforming zeal seems to be directed against legal abuses as in Bleak House and Barnaby Rudge, while his representation of Jerry Cruncher, bank manager and "Resurrectionist" was intended to excite horror of body-snatching in the name of science.

However, the historical element that is most impressive is the vivid description of revolutionary Paris. The French Revolution is an historical event, or series of events that lends itself with almost fatal ease to dramatic treatment. It had already been presented in this fashion by Carlyle, whose example was in this instance thoroughly congenial to Dickens. Such dramatic contrasts as the luxurious, haughty, arrogant aristocrat of the type of Monseigneur and the half-starved, wretched, obsequious peasants on his estate or the famishing, sullen-looking citizens, who frequented the wine-shop of Defarge, seemed to Dickens to illustrate the historical circumstances that preceded the outbreak of the Revolution. It is noticeable also that his dramatic sense leads him to concentrate on the human relationship involved in the Revolution, the monstrously harsh treatment of the people by their superiors, their lowering resentment, and their uncontrollable hatred and cruelty when

their turn of power arrives. Dickens leaves out of account the more impersonal and intangible forces that were also involved in the French Revolution - the corrosive effect of the political, religious and philosophical criticisms of Montesquieu and Voltaire, the proclamation of human equality by Rousseau, the reaction caused by the American Colonies' successful revolt against Britain, the precarious financial position of France, the imminence of national bankruptcy, and the incompetence of the King. Dickens felt, rather than reasoned about, abuses.

If Scott had dealt with the French Revolution one might imagine him concentrating attention on the well-meaning incapacity of Louis XVI and unpopularity of his Queen, Marie Antoinette. Necker, Mirabeau, Danton, Marat and Robespierre would almost certainly have appeared in the novel. Thackeray, on the other hand, would have devoted more attention to the manners and general way of living of aristocrats under the Ancien Régime and also to that of the middle-class, which was more important and wealthy in France at the time than one would imagine from A Tale of Two Cities. Without doubt, people like Defarge and the men of Saint Antoine did help considerably to carry through the Revolution, but it was not engineered by them. Consequently Dickens leaves much out of account in his descriptions of the French Revolution. This might be justified on the grounds that he was exercising artistic restraint, that he did not wish to go beyond the limits of his plot. But plainly Dickens did intend the Marquis to be typical of the aristocrats who oppressed the people, and his purpose was to describe in an impressionistic manner the class hatred that flared up into open hostility. His

view of the French Revolution was probably typically Liberal. It was also rather theatrical - too much simplified into blacks and whites. He applauded the revolution of an oppressed people to throw off the chains of tyranny, but deplored the excesses they committed in the enjoyment of new-found liberty. It is in terms of class-hatred that he describes the French Revolution.

Dickens's view will hardly be corroborated by modern historians. Admittedly in the light of modern standards the lot of the French peasantry was deplorable; the nobles still had their privileges long after they had ceased to act as the protectors of their tenants. Bad agricultural methods often reduced the peasants to the verge of starvation. But the French peasants were no more oppressed than those of Poland and some of the eastern German States. It was because they were more enlightened that they felt their feudal bonds so galling. Neither were the nobles cold-blooded oppressors of the type of the Marquis, although he may have had his prototypes. They were half-hearted in the defence of privileges, which they knew to be unjust. Had they been men of the resolute temper of the Marquis the Revolution would never have occurred. Weakness and incompetence on the part of the governing class are generally one of the main contributing factors to any revolution.

Although Dickens's picture of the French Revolution is not very comprehensive and naturally emphasises those features that captured his imagination most strongly, that is not to say that he fails in handling the historical episodes in his novel. On

the contrary his descriptions of the fall of the Bastille, the harsh treatment of aristocratic prisoners, the thirst for blood that was glutted by the wholesale executions of the Reign of Terror are brief but vivid and revealing, and what is more they are exceptionally well assimilated into the plot. Whether it was owing to the fact that he was burdened with less historical knowledge than Scott and Thackeray or not, it must be admitted that neither of them has blended history and romance better than Dickens has done in A Tale of Two Cities, even if he does incline a little too far in the direction of romantic dramatisation of historical events.

In most of Dickens's earlier novels, particularly in the Pickwick Papers (1836-37), he had not paid great attention to the working out of the plot; it had been swayed by the vagaries of the characters. By the time he wrote A Tale of Two Cities, Dickens had come to take the plot very seriously and worked it out almost on mechanical lines. In Barnaby Rudge it is easy to see that a compact and coherent plot is impossible in view of Dickens's interest in the characters and the manner in which the Gordon Riots captured his imagination. John Willet, Gabriel Varden, Dolly Varden, etc., claim more of their creator's attention than is strictly necessary for the contribution they make to the plot. It can hardly be that Dickens's ability to create diverse, original and interesting characters was growing exhausted, for Edwin Drood (1870) provides evidence to the contrary, but his sense of craftsmanship had grown, and the plot is no longer sacrificed to the mere delight in character portrayal. All of the characters are necessary for the development of the

plot. Even Jerry Cruncher, with whose idiosyncrasies Dickens must have had difficulty in refraining from dealing at length, established by his "Resurrectionist" activities the fact that the burial of Roger Cly, the spy, was a hoax. In the same manner historical episodes are described not for their own sake but for the effect they have on the relation of the characters. Thus the Revolution exists for the story, which means that, in his relation of the fictitious to the historical, Dickens adopted a method the very opposite of that usually employed by the historical novelist. Indeed the novel does rather suggest that the revolution was chiefly caused by Madame Defarge to serve her private ends. The September massacres are not dragged in, for the mere sake of description. They are given in brief and only so far as they are concerned with the plot; the executions of the King and Queen are merely mentioned to keep the reader in touch with the course of history.

The letters Dickens wrote during the composition of A Tale of Two Cities show that he took considerable pains to condense the story. Probably this condensation was forced on him by the nature of the historical event with which he was dealing. He had not at his hand an event like the Gordon Riots, which it was possible to incorporate in its entirety in a novel. The Gordon Riots formed an isolated event with neither significant causes nor consequences, but it was dramatic and spectacular, ideal material for fiction. It was impossible to incorporate so easily an historical movement of the magnitude of the French Revolution. As Dickens's primary purpose was not to describe the progress and personages of the Revolution, but rather its effect on the minds

of the people, it was natural that he should concentrate on the fictitious. He could illustrate the historical by means of the fictitious, or rather, except in the case of the storming of the Bastille and the description of the executions in the Reign of Terror, there is little distinction between the fictitious and the historical. There is some historical basis, for instance, for the representation of the Marquis and his relations with his tenants, but strictly speaking the character is fictitious. Accordingly it seems that the plot of A Tale of Two Cities is well constructed, because Dickens does not place the historical and the fictitious side by side and endeavour to conceal the conjunction but presents the historical in terms of the fictitious. The historical is "novelised" in the process; that is to say, it is made to conform to Dickens's imaginative and tendencious reading of the Revolution.

A careful reader will notice the means that Dickens employs to achieve his effects. First of all, the trial of Darnay at the Old Bailey is meant to bring out the striking resemblance of Carton to the prisoner - a likeness to be utilized years later in France. Secondly, the burial of the spy, Roger Cly, the escape of the "chief mourner," Barsad, and the midnight expedition of Jerry and other "resurrectionists" on the cemetery, only to find the coffin full of bricks are all to make the confusion of Barsad during the Terror and the admission of Carton to the gaol where Darney is confined seem natural. Finally, the taking of the scarcely defended Bastille serves to lead Defarge to "one Hundred and Five North Tower," where he finds that terrible Confession of Manette's, which condemns the latter's son-in-law to the guillotine.

In short, in this story there is a steady progress from the beginning towards the crisis - the imprisonment of Darney - and the dénouement, working itself through Carton's sacrifice, has been well and artistically prepared for almost from the first page. All these depend upon a well-defined plot - a construction of plot, which is, to quote a Chinese idiomatic phrase, "a divine garment without a seam." If we compare this with the loosely constructed plot and rambling episodical narrative of Barnaby Rudge and of Martin Chuzzlewit, the difference is at once discernible.

As for characters, Dickens tells us, that "I set myself the task of making a picturesque story rising in every chapter with characters true to nature, but whom the story should express more than they should express themselves by dialogue. I mean, in other words, that I fancied a story of incident might be written ... pounding the characters in its own mortar, and beating their interest out of them."[1] But the number pounded in the "mortar" is comparatively small, and from the first, attention is concentrated upon the chief characters. Lucie Manette, Miss Pross and Madame Defarge are the three important female characters. Of the first, the heroine of the story - a gentle, kind-hearted woman - there is not much to be said beyond that she is a devoted, loving daughter, wife and mother, and has little more individuality than any pretty young lady with similar traits might have.

Lucie's fiercely adoring nurse, Miss Pross, is, however, a fine study - a mixture of eccentricity and pathos, of sentiment and common sense. Miss Pross shows something of the same mixture of eccentricity and outward severity with kindliness of heart that

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1. Forster's Life of Dickens, iii. 323

we find in Betsey Trotwood. The latter ceases to take an interest in David Copperfield when he disappoints her expectations by being born a boy, instead of a girl, but later when he needs her help, after escaping from his harsh step-father, she gives it willingly. Miss Pross is a gentle, tender woman when the time comes for gentleness and tenderness, but when it comes to saving her young mistress from the clutches of the guillotine, she is what she calls herself, an "Englishwoman." Only a writer with Dickens's sympathetic outlook could have drawn such a character at a time when spinsters were more frequently caricatured.

The third woman, Madame Defarge, whose influence is shown to be paramount in the whole movement, and who is not only a figure of colourful romance, but a symbolical figure of history, is coldly calculating and ruthless in her pursuit of revenge. A certain amount of sympathy is excited by the wrongs she has suffered, but for all that she remains revolting, mostly by reason of her cold, almost passionless, hatred, which strikes one as inhumanly malevolent. Had she been prompted by angry passion she might have appeared more human. She is scarcely a human being,but plays the part of an avenging fury.

Of the important male characters, Darney, the hero of the story, is rather colourless. His one outstanding trait is his humanity, his pity for the sufferings of the peasantry. But like many honourable and straightforward gentlemen, Darney is less interesting than characters of less moral excellence. He is at best a somewhat unsatisfactory creation. His character lacks consistency and strength and he is overshadowed by the figure of Carton to whom he forms a kind of feeble foil.

Dr. Manette is a picturesque figure, without being a powerful one, whose sufferings and madness are treated with sympathy. On the whole, in dealing with this broken and unfortunate victim of persecution Dickens shows more restraint than one might have expected of him. He does not make the characterisation of the Doctor an opporunity for the display of maudlin sentiment, except on a few occasions, such as the first interview of the father and daughter after his release. However, Dr.Manette is a necessary figure for the plot and plays a very significant part in it.

Mr. Lorry, the brisk, cheerful man of business, whose purposely matter-of-fact demeanour does not hide his kindness, is an admirable foil to Dr. Manette. His part in the working out of the story is very important, and springs naturally from his calm insistence that business is business and must be attended to in spite of political storms or revolution. Mr. Lorry of Telson's bank belongs to the same category as John Jarndyce and such, - the elderly men worth more than the youngsters about them, whom Dickens loved to draw.

The figure of Defarge, the republican patriot, presents throughout something of the charm which is commonly attributed to the French character. His role as leader of the men of St.Antoine indicates that he possessed plenty of physical courage and strength of will along with some degree of tact. He is, in fact, a good-humoured and respectable Frenchman, transformed into a revolutionary by a sense of the wrongs endured by himself and his brethren. But for the brutal treatment of Manette, his old master, he might not have become so bitter against the aristocracy, but that drove him to form a fixed resolution of revenge. Defarge himself would have

considered the death of the Marquis and his nephew,Darney, a satisfactory revenge, but his wife was bent on extirpating the whole family,including Lucie, her child, and her father.

But the most pleasant of all the characters pounded in the "mortar" is that of the clever, chivalrous "wastrel",Sidney Carton.[1] He is undoubtedly the centre of interest in this book. His dissipation and subservience to Stryver are not due to lack of ability or proneness to vice, but to weakness of will-power. His behaviour towards Miss Manette reveals a pathetic awareness of his own failings and at the same time a certain power of self-discipline. He declares his love, but only to say farewell, after asking her to remember him. When he appears in Paris eight years later he seems transformed, so much so that there is no hint of inconsistency with the earlier representation of his character; all his latent qualities of coolness, decision, and strength of mind are called forth by this emergency. He shows that command of himself and of the situation that is the distinguishing feature of the heroic character.

Throughout the whole book, we find a great difference,perhaps the most striking difference, which distinguishes A Tale of Two Cities from Barnaby Rudge or any of Dickens's other works. That is the almost entire absence of humour. In Barnaby Rudge Dickens is perhaps in his happiest mood when he shows us solemn John Willet

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1. "That special title of Memory Carton," writes Forster in his Life of Charles Dickens (vii.246) "shows that what led to the greatest success of the book as written was always in his mind; and another of the memoranda is this rough hint of the character itself, 'The drunken ?-dissipated?-what?- LION - and his JACKALL and Primer, stealing down to him at unwonted hours."

and his respectful cronies at the Maypole. Mrs Varden is also treated in a spirit of pure humour. And the grim humour which is exhibited in the presentment of Dennis, the hangman, is also characteristic of Dickens. But we must say that in Barnaby Rudge Dickens's humour is already more or less subdued,and in A Tale of Two Cities, it almost disappears; for strictly speaking neither the brutalities of that 'honest tradesman,' Jerry, nor the laconisms of Miss Pross, can well be called by that name. The absence of humour was the result of a state of mind engendered by the unusual stress and effort demanded by the particular story, that made Dickens disregard those peculiarities which usually excited his good-humour.

On account of this, however, a Tale of Two Cities has been severely criticised by some critics. Their criticisms may be grouped into two heads. First, the book is not eminently characteristic of its author; the true Dickensian element is weaker here than in any other of the writer's works. Secondly, there is a sense of effort in A Tale of Two Cities; the writer is trying, and trying very hard, to write his story. In answer to the first criticism, we admit that the story is not written in the usual manner of Dickens, but it must be understood that it does not profess to be, and indeed was never intended to be, so written. Besides the style suits the tragic interest of the story; it does not strike the reader as incongruous. There is considerable truth in the second criticism, but the sense of effort is due to the circumstances of the composition of the story, which were quite different from those of most of his

novels. Certain historical events had to be embodied in the story and the end was not left to chance but was in the writer's mind from the beginning. Hence it was natural that the style should be concentrated instead of diffuse, and that owing to the restraints of the plot it should be more laboured than usual. Possibly this effort to write at the top of his bent resulted in the mannerisms, especially the forms of repetition, which are more obvious in A Tale of Two Cities than in the other novels.

Compared with Barnaby Rudge, A Tale of Two Cities is a better example of an historical novel, though its historical content may not be taken so directly from the pages of history. The historical chapters in Barnaby Rudge occupy a considerable part of the book and are an amplified version of the account given in the Annual Register. Dickens incorporates this account without fusing it so well with his plot as he does in the case of A Tale of Two Cities. The historical accuracy of the latter work may not be above suspicion, but at least ~~it~~ the novel is a masterly example of the blending of fictitious elements and those that its author believed to be historical. It does not include even one historical personage as Barnaby Rudge does; Dickens does not discuss the political situation in France in his own person as he does the rise of the Protestant agitation in Barnaby Rudge; he practises artistic self-effacement much more in A Tale of Two Cities. True, the latter work does convey Dickens's impressions of the French Revolution, but it is done through the medium of the incidents and the sentiments expressed by the characters and not by comments in his own person. Even more than Barnaby Rudge, A Tale of Two Cities illustrates Dickens's dramatic method of handling history. He

dispenses with laborious antiquarian methods, introduction, notes, author's comments, descriptions of costumes (although these are hardly necessary in a novel so near his own time, and on events so comparatively familiar) and lights up the past by his intuitive grasp of the state of popular feeling at the time. One cannot say that Dickens invariably grasped the true state of popular feeling; possibly he coloured it with hues borrowed from his own ardent, generous nature. But whatever the historian may say, the literary critic must admit that Dickens explored a new territory in historical fiction by his impressionistic pictures of revolutionary outbreaks.

IV.

In his historical novels Dickens employs his natural style, as Thackeray did also as a rule, except in Esmond, where he tries to recapture the idiom of a bygone age. But Thackeray was using the autobiographical method and it was natural that in Esmond he should employ a style such as the supposed narrator would be likely to use. The dialogue in Barnaby Rudge and A Tale of Two Cities does not differ from that of Dickens's other novels, as indeed there was no need to introduce any archaic flavour in view of the proximity of the period in which they are both set to his own time. On the whole Dickens's style is vigorous and well-suited for narrative purposes, but perhaps its worst blemish is its tendency to fall into blank verse, a fault of which he himself was conscious. Yet many passages which express strong emotions, and which were apparently written in the white heat of inspiration, are free from this defect. Such a passage as the masterly descriptions

of the Gordon Riots, for instance, is marked by none of Dickens's mannerisms, but is, on the contrary, distinguished by vigour, directness and simplicity of language. In A Tale of Two Cities we have passages marked by similar qualities, like the description of the flight from Paris[1] where additional vividness is gained by the change over from the third person to the first, the description of the French jury and judges[2], and the report of the cross-examination of Barsad and Cly[3], the latter of which has all the merits of good journalism.[4] At its best - best, that is to say as a medium of narrative - Dickens's style is clear, idiomatic and forcible, free from rhetorical devices, and vibrating with subdued energy. His phrases are well-chosen and happily turned, and his language copious and expressive.

From the two examples of historical novels which Dickens did write it is difficult to estimate his place in the ranks of historical novelists. When a writer with little knowledge of history and not notable for the possession of a historic sense turns to the historical novel it is inevitable that the resulting product should be a tour de force. And both Barnaby Rudge and A Tale of Two Cities may be so described. The former incorporates extremely vivid descriptions of a spectacular historical incident, but beyond that it has not much claim to be considered as an historical novel. Apart from the Gordon Riots there is little in the book that definitely

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1. A Tale of Two Cities, Book iii, chap. viii.
2. Ibid, chap. X.
3. Ibid, chap XVI.
4. Among Dickens's first few books it is very noticeable for this peculiar excellence.

locates it in the eighteenth century, except of course the customary references to bad roads infested by highwaymen. A Tale of Two Cities is, however, a much more interesting experiment in the art of the historical novel. Here one can have no doubt about the historical character of the book. The Revolution itself is not described in set terms, but it is all important in the story. All the characters are affected by its course and it is through its effect on their lives that Dickens conveys an impression of the psychological forces released by this cataclysmic movement. Dickens is much more successful than Thackeray in interrelating the lives of his characters with historical incidents and not even Scott can surpass him in describing the emotions of people ~~implicated~~ involved in events over which they have no control. In Barnaby Rudge Dickens shows a tendency to lose sight of his fictitious characters owing to his interest in the historical happenings, but this criticism cannot be brought against A Tale of Two Cities. Perhaps its greatest merit is its remarkable illustration of Dickens's capacity for handling history in the selective method of an artist. [That in so doing he gives his own interpretation of the French Revolution, which may not be the right one, is no reflection on the artistic unity of the novel.]

Dickens's attitude towards history is notably different from that of Scott or Thackeray. He shows practically none of Scott's liking for history as such, his interest in the great figures of history, in political intrigue, in costume and the other externals of any period. He has none of Scott's lively sense of the past and his imaginative realisation of the manner of living of past generations. Nor though he deals with the eighteenth century does

he share Thackeray's interest in its manners and amusements. This interest in the past does not spring from the attraction of a congenial period; it has a more didactic bent. The Gordon Riots, Dickens regarded as an awful example of the evils wrought by religious bigotry, which serves as a cloak for criminal self-seeking, and he was anxious to make his description of it a warning to his own generation. Dickens was not attracted, like Scott and Thackeray, by the "good old days"; to him they were the "bad old days." The French Revolution appealed to him, probably because it was still a living issue, because its theories were still affecting contemporary political ideas. To a believer in progress it was, in spite of its excesses, a landmark in human emancipation from crushing social tyranny. Fortunately Dickens's dramatic imagination always left his didactic intentions far behind.

CHAPTER IV.

THE HISTORICAL NOVELS of CHARLES KINGSLEY.

HYPATIA, WESTWARD HO! and HEREWARD the WAKE.

I.

Charles Kingsley was drawn towards the historical novel by a combination of motives. In the first place he had a lively interest in the past, especially in critical periods, like the fifth century, the Reformation, and the time of the Norman invasion, when there were conflicts in thought or outlook or civilisation, and when armed hostilities were the outward reflection of warfare in men's minds. Kingsley was temperamentally suited for writing historical fiction. His restless, enquiring mind, his boundless enthusiasm, and his ardent imagination enabled him to acquire a wide knowledge of the outlook and way of life of men in different periods. It was unfortunate that his ardour was accompanied, and perhaps was to some extent stimulated, by strong prejudices. Kingsley went to the past to find food for his prejudices, rather than to seek the truth by patient and dispassionate research. Not that he was deliberately intellectually dishonest; but like most people, he had found reasons for bolstering his prejudices and ignored other reasons for modifying them. Consequently his strong imaginative powers fitted him for painting vivid and detailed pictures of the past, his view of historical periods in which religious and other issues were involved was distorted by opinions formed on contemporary problems. That is to say, he did not possess the genuine historic sense of the writer who allows himself to be guided by the facts of history. He adapted history to his own purposes.

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1. For synopses of them see Appendix A: VIII, IX and X.

Kingsley could not confine himself to recreating the past largely for its own sake, as Scott and Thackeray did. He wanted to illuminate contemporary problems from a new angle by describing what he conceived to be parallel situations in earlier periods. True - those writers have their particular predilections, interests and ideals of conduct in general; but they do not view the past through modern spectacles so consistently as does Kingsley. They were not anxious to present history in such a way as to support particular religious or philosophical convictions. In fact their interest in the intellectual and spiritual life of past epochs was different from the didactic approach of one who was a teacher and preacher. Kingsley carried into the historical novel his propagandist bent, that is his desire to persuade the reader by preaching the rightness of his views.

Before he wrote Hypatia, his first historical novel, Kingsley was widely known as a writer on social problems. In Yeast (1848) and Alton Locke (1850) he had dealt with economic and political questions that were agitating Victorian society. His historical novels are not so openly propagandist (the whole point of the method is indirect approach), but it is easy to discern in them Kingsley's preoccupation with the religious, social and intellectual problems of his own day. Dickens in Barnaby Rudge and A Tale of Two Cities was something of a propagandist; he had tried to instil principles of religious toleration and political freedom into the minds of his readers, but his propaganda work was not carried out on ~~the same~~ so large a scale as that of Kingsley. He had not the

latter's intellectual equipment for dealing with philosophical and religious problems.

Whether Kingsley's contribution to the historical novel was valuable or not, it is certain that his handling of history was different from that of his predecessors. He was not interested primarily in historical personages or historical incidents; he could give dramatic representations of historical events or describe them with accuracy, as Lytton did, but that was not his main purpose. He chose periods in which study could help him a great deal, but in which the imagination had to supply most of the material. And he is primarily concerned to show ~~that~~ the impact of spiritual and intellectual forces on the minds and souls of representative types of men. His characters represent sides or parties, groups, points of view or philosophies. He represents history in terms of mental and spiritual conflict, and human nature as determined and governed by forces outside ~~of themselves.~~ itself.

II.

Of Kingsley's three historical novels, Hypatia is the best conceived. It was written in the prime of his life and bore on its face the character of a controversial work. Kingsley was tired for the time being of English subjects of which, he says, "I can write no more just now. I have exhausted both my stock and my brain, and really require to rest it, by turning it to some new field, in which there is richer and more picturesque life, and the elements are less confused, or rather,

may be handled more in the mass than English ones now. I have long wished to do something antique, and get out my thoughts about the connection of the old world and the new; Schiller's Gods of Greece expresses, I think, a tone of feeling very common, and which finds its vent in modern Neo-Platonism - Anythingarianism"[1] "My present notion" he writes "is to write a historical romance of the beginning of the fifth century, which has been breeding in my head these two years,... My idea in the romance is to set forth Christianity as the only really democratic creed, and philosophy, above all, spiritualism, as the most exclusively aristocratic creed. Such has been my opinion for a long time, and which I have been reading lately confirms it more and more. Even Synesius, 'the philosophic' bishop, is an aristocrat by the side of Cyril. It seems to me that such a book might do good just now, while the scribes and Pharisees, Christian and heathen, are saying, 'This people, which knoweth not the law, is accursed."[2]

Again he writes, "Hypatia grows, little darling, and I am getting very fond of her; but the period is very dark, folks having been given to lying then, as well as now, besides being so blind as not to see the meaning of their own time (perhaps, though, we don't of ours), and so put down, not what we should

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1. See his letter to F.D. Maurice, Jan. 16, 1851 collected in Charles Kingsley: Letters and Memories of his Life, edited by his wife. (Mac. ed. 1908) p. 108.
2. Charles Kingsley: Letters etc. (To Maurice, Jan. 16, 1851 p. 109.

like to know, but what they liked to remember. Nevertheless there are materials for a grand book. And if I fail in it, I may as well give up writing - perhaps the best thing for me...."[1]

Hypatia published first serially in Fraser's Magazine fron Jan. 1852 to April, 1853 and then in book form in the Summer, had a mixed reception. It was recognised by thoughtful readers not only as a most valuable page of history, but as a real work of art. An anonymous reviewer tells us "that one of the foremost scholars of the day remarked that he had been studying the fall of the Roman Empire for forty years, poring over Latin and Greek authorities that could throw no light upon his favourite subject, and that there was a man who had put it all into two volumes and had painted a picture of it besides"[2] But in one section of the English Church the novel made its author bitter enemies, for Kingsley had the Tractarians in mind when he depicted the conditions of the Church in the fifth century. Many regarded it as unorthodox; others condemned it as immoral. "Are you aware", Bunsen wrote to Kingsley just after the book was published in book form, "that many people object to reading it or allowing it to be read, because, the author says in the Preface, it is not written for those of the pure mind?"[3] Other objected to the exposure of the meanness, vileness and wickedness of Cyril and other

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1. Charles Kingsley: Letters (To Brimley) p. 109.
2. Fraser's Magazine, May, 1855, p. 507.
3. See Benson's letter to Kingsley, May 1853 in Kingsley: Letters etc. The passage referred to is the opening paragraph of the Preface where the author say "A picture of life in the fifth century must need contain much which will be painful to any reader, and which the young and innocent will do well to leave altogether unread." - See Preface to Hypatia (Macmillan ed. 1881) vii.

so-called fathers, because they regarded these figures with intense reverence. So the ugly charge of heresy was hinted. A motion in convocation at Oxford to confer on him the degree of D.C.L. was defeated by the High Church party.

Newman's Callista [1] may have been a reply to Hypatia from the Catholic point of view; but there is no hint of such a purpose, and his assertion that parts of the book had been written before the publication of Hypatia cannot be doubted. All the same its publication was probably hastened by Kingsley's attacks on the authority of the Roman Catholic Church. One may infer that Newman considered Kingsley guilty of misrepresenting the Church of the fifth century from a reply he made to the latter's objection to a sermon preached by Newman to "fanatic and hot-headed young men". Newman retorts: "Hot-headed young men! why man, you are writing a romance. You think the scene is Alexandria on the Spanish Main, where you may let your imagination play revel to the extent of inveracity". [2]

Kingsley's main source for the historical background of the fifth century was Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire (1776-88), [3] but there were also contemporary writings from which he could draw useful information. He read steadily the works of the Christian Fathers. He assures us that "every expression of Pambo's is a crib from some one, word for word." [4] He was also well acquainted with the philosophical and religious works of Synesius, whose Epistolae would be

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1. A Sketch of the third century, first published anonymously in 1855, and afterwards with Newman's name in 1856.
2. See Newman's Apologia pro Vita Sua, (Everyman's Library) P. 262.
3. The story of Hypatia was given in its forty-seventh Chapter.
4. See Kingsley's letter to J.M. Ludlow in Charles Kingsley: Letters etc. p. 135.

a fact which he thought was there, and which was found there at last."[1] The hard-reading Kingsley had undertaken for the production of Hypatia shows that he was not superficial, at least in the matter of acquiring his material.

In Hypatia[2] Kingsley goes back to a period more remote than any in which Scott, Thackeray, and Dickens had set their stories. Probably he was attracted by the colourful, cosmopolitan, chaotic life of Alexandria, which in the fifth century was a welter of creeds and races. But this was also a critical time in the struggle between Christianity and paganism and Kingsley appears to have been specially interested in such crises. Besides he saw the opportunity of warning his readers against sacerdotal pride and arrogance in the person of Cyril and thus attacking the priestly and ecclesiastical claims of the Romanists and the Tractarians. Hypatia, like his two other historical novels, is the work of a controversialist.

Before Kingsley, few writers had based their novels or stories on ancient history, the chief instances of such works being Lockhart's Valerius (1821), Moore's Epicurean (1827), Croly's Salathiel (1829), Bulwer Lytton's Last Days of Pompeii (1834) and Wilkie Collin's Antonina (1850). Among them The Epicurean, Salathiel and Antonina are forgotten, but Valerius is perhaps slightly better known to students, while The Last Days of Pompeii ranks as a minor classic. Valerius describes the visit of a youthful British pagan to Rome and his conversion to the faith of the Christians who worshipped in the catacombs. Lockhart tries to paint in broad strokes the

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1. Charles Kingsley: Letters etc. p. 145.
2. For its sources see Appendix B: III p. 403.

glories and splendours of Rome, but his descriptions lack the vitality and the glowing colour of Kingsley's sketches of Alexandrian life. The Last Days of Pompeii was possibly based on a deeper amd more accurate knowledge of its period than was Hypatia of its rather later period but the latter work, historical travesty of a controversialist though it has been called, has more animation and movement.

Kingsley's Cambridge and Edinburgh lectures have an important bearing on Hypatia. They bear witness to his deep interest in the conflict between religion and pagan philosophy, and also to his capacity for recreating the life of ancient society. In a lecture on Neo-Platonism he discusses Philo and Plotinus sympathetically and mentions Hypatia briefly, although Proclus is dismissed with the scorn of a robust Christian. But still stronger proof of the fascination of remote periods for him and his habitual attitude to them may be found in the Cambridge volume The Roman and the Teuton (1864), which shows more clearly even than his other writings that, whether he approached the past as a lecturer or romancer, he could see Alexandria or Rome only in the light of the nineteenth century, by bringing them, as it were, into his own parish. We perceive this modernising habit of his everywhere in the Cambridge lectures;[1] for Kingsley was very much the propagandist and preacher.

The historical background of a particular novel must depend partly on the intention and interest of the writer and partly on the material that is available. Thus Thackeray emphasises the social life of the eighteenth century because he was chiefly

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1. One of them on "the Dying Empire" strongly reminds one of Hypatia.

interested in that aspect of its history and because he had read widely in the essays, novels, memoirs, letters, etc. which illustrate the manners of different classes of its society. Dickens brings out the popular passions which found an outlet in the French Revolution, because he was interested in the condition and feelings of the people and because Caryle's French Revolution had presented vividly the contrast between the privileged aristocracy and the oppressed peasantry. Kingsley was attracted not so much as Scott by romantic events, or so much as Thackeray by the manners and amusements of society, as by the desire to realise the general temper of an age, the complexities and cross-currents produced by the clash of beliefs. He was attracted by ecclesiastical intrigues. Or rather he was drawn to an age because of its potentialities for the propagandist. His description of the savage behaviour of mobs differs noticeably from that of Dickens. The latter describes very vividly the organisation and actions of a mob, but he does not bring out so clearly as Kingsley the forces that inspire the violent actions of the mob. Kingsley was something of a philosopher and sociologist. He was interested in ideas and the reasons for things in a way in which Dickens was not. Since Kingsley's interest was directed towards the mental and spiritual life of an age it is obvious that his handling of history will differ from that of preceding novelists, though it is not wanting in vividness and action. It is easier to find historical sources for incidents or for manners or for characters, that for something so comparatively elusive as the dominating intellectual and religious forces of a period. True, for the fifth century

there is more material available for a study of the philosophical and religious life of men than there is for their political and social activities. But it is plain also that the novelist must colour this material with his own interpretation more perceptibly than he would, if he were dealing with more historical affairs. Hence it is difficult to estimate the accuracy of Kingsley's presentation of the fifth century as a diseased age, a turmoil of conflicting creeds and ideas, when men, having lost their moorings in ancient philosophy, were attracted by speculations of the most extravagant kind. Certainly there is so much licence in speculation, so much bigotry, appalling cruelty, brutality, and sensuality in Kingsley's description of the life of Alexandria, that one is tempted to think that he is guilty of exaggeration and that he takes the fulminations of the Fathers against the wickedness of contemporary society as literally true.

A number of historical personages, such as Hypatia, Theon, Orestes, Cyril, Synesius and Augustine, do appear in Hypatia, but comparatively little is known about any of them but St. Augustine. However, Kingsley's portrait of Hypatia and his description of her death are quite accurate, although the ideas and sentiments he ascribes to her are not drawn from certain knowledge of her own teaching and writings, but are such as a Neo-Platonist might entertain. Cyril may not have been quite so bad as Kingsley represents him, but he was arrogant and dogmatic and his apparent approval of the expulsion of thousands

of the Jews is greatly to his discredit.[1] Synesius and St. Augustine are quite well and fairly represented, and although they are not essential to the story, they offer a much-needed contrast to the ecclesiastical agitator Cyril.

Of actual historical incidents Kingsley had very little ready to his hand, except the expulsion of the Jews, the conspiracy of Orestes, and the murder of Hypatia. But the historical interest does not depend so much on the revivifying of personages and events, although Kingsley can recreate characters with notable vividness, as on the presentation of the philosophy and religion of the time. Kingsley saw the fifth century as "one of those critical and cardinal ears in the history of the human race, in which virtues and vices manifest themselves side by side - even, at times, in the same person - with the most startling openness and power."[2] Hence he devotes all his energies by means of Hypatia's lectures and arguments, the conversation of Raphael Ben-Ezra and of Synesius, the preaching of St. Augustine and the reflections of Philammon to suggesting very forcibly the mental climate of the age, its confused and perplexing welter of beliefs and ideas. In the works of other novelists we generally find the historical background suggested by means of direct description of the

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1. In the earlier years of his episcopate he had failed to check, if he had not instigated, the unseemly outrages of Christians of Alexandria against the heathen and Jewish population, and particularly the brutal murder by the mob of Hypatia, a talented and highly esteemed lady who was head of a school of Greek philosophy in the city - See The First Six Centuries: Sketches from Early Church History by F.W. VRoom, London and New York: Mac., 1923 p. 91.
2. See Preface to Hypatia vii.

environment of the characters; but in Hypatia the atmosphere is to a large extent created by means of the dialogue. One cannot help noting the frequency and length of the conversations between characters in Hypatia. Usually the dialogue is natural but sometimes it degenerates into preaching and lecturing, as, for instance, in Hypatia's interview with Philammon when she dilates on the grandeur of Philosophy[1] or in Raphael Ben-Ezra's endeavour to prove to Hypatia the superiority of Christianity over Neo-Platonism.[2]

Still in reading Hypatia we are led back into the Alexandria of the fifth century, with its fanatical monks doing the will of the bigoted Cyril, attacking now the Jews and now the pagans; with its Roman prefect attempting to hold the lawless population in check alternately by force and by flattery; with its belated schools of Greek philosophy; with its Church already sunk into superstition and corruption; with its teeming masses of every race and colour, indolent and hysterical, violent and cruel, saved from famine by public distribution of food, and amused by bloody gladiatorial spectacles.

The interest of the tale appears to the ordinary reader to lie in the presentation of Hypatia, the priestess of philosophy, lamenting the divine fire that had left the pagan shrines; Orestes, the prefect, a type of the provincial governor with his laziness, weakness and dissipation; the fierce Goths with their songs and myths of Asgard and the Teutonic heroes, ready to fight for any

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1. Hypatia Vol. I. pp. 302-3.
2. Ibid., pp. 261-5.

master. These Goths in their barbaric strength present a fine contrast to the luxurious Alexandrians, cowardly and treacherous, greedy and sensual. The monks overrun the scene, blind alike in their fanaticism and in their charity, but disciplined to almost military precision by the stern Cyril. They persecute the Jews and indulge in heresy - hunts, but they are also employed in works of mercy, in caring for the sick and the distressed.

But to the student the interest of the novel centres in the conflict between Greek philosophy or rather Alexandrine Neo-Platonism and Christianity. Neo-Platonism is represented by Hypatia in her mental conflicts and in her disappointment at the failure of philosophy to exercise a wider appeal. What Kingsley has succeeded in doing is in relating contemporary philosophy with the actual incidents of the story, showing it as something that affected the actions of the characters, Hypatia is,convincingly real, a creature of flesh and blood, but she also illustrates in her person the strength and weakness, and the inevitable fate of pagan philosophy. George Eliot's Romola resembles Hypatia in her union of beauty and intellectual power, and like her she is somewhat lacking in vitality owing to the emphasis laid on her mental and spiritual life. Both are, however, women of enthusiastic natures and strongly devoted to the principles and causes they embrace. Romola at first is practically a pagan, brought up on classical philosophy, but, unlike Hypatia, she yields to the attraction of Christianity.

Envy at Hypatia's influence is rife in Alexandria among the followers of the bishop Cyril, one of the arch-fanatics of

history. Thus philosophic intelligence is brought face to face with religious obscurantism and bigotry. The temper of the proselytizer conquers, because the spirit of the age is in its favour, while the philosophy belongs to a dead age. But somehow or other we feel that the picture presented has failed to give convincing evidence of the superiority of Christianity to philosophy. It is surprising that philosophy should be represented in its highest form, while Christianity misunderstood by its adherents leads to fanaticism, crimes, and atrocities. Certainly the author achieves his purpose of showing the evil effects of a Christianity accompanied by force and fraud, but why should such a corrupt Christianity have triumphed over a more liberal philosophy? Of course, it has to be remembered that Kingsley was unable to describe the immorality of the devotees of philosophy owing to current notions of decency. Otherwise he might have shown even an imperfect christianity as superior to a pagan philosophy. As it was he had to be content with innuendoes.

Kingsley in Hypatia is concerned with certain problems of his own day, and in the subtitle, New Foes with an Old Face, frankly faces contemporary foes. This subtitle seems to signify the author's intention of showing how modern controversies may be paralleled by those of ancient times. Such problems, as the conflict between religion and philosophy, and reason and emotion recur from age to age, in the fifth century as well as in the nineteenth. Kingsley was also bent on emphasising that Christianity fails when it is utilized as a means of acquiring power or when it is preached solely in a doctrinaire fashion.

He was attacking that reverence for authority rather than the spirit of Christianity which produces fanaticism, intolerance, and sacerdotalism. In the conflict between religion and philosophy in the fifth century he saw a parallel to the struggle between religion and science and between Protestantism and Catholicism in his own day. Yet this parallel is not pressed home too strongly. Although the writer has a purpose in view, he prefers to have it implicit, to leave the reader to draw it for himself and does not sacrifice his art to the desire to point a moral. But there is no mistaking the force of that moral, which is that the longings of men can be answered by nothing but the Gospel of Christ, which is communicated by a church often corrupted by priestly pride and covetousness, stained by ignorance and worldiness, but which, with all its weakness, is preferable to a bold atheism. In spite of theological quibbles, bitter sectarian disputes, monstrous errors, and times of indolence, the Church conveys a message that meets the spiritual needs of men in a manner no mere philosophy can do. If some of the servants of the Church have done her shame, others have reflected her divine inspiration by their loyalty, devotion, and saintliness. In effect, Kingsley gives a justification of Christianity at its weakest.

There is little attempt at constructing a well-woven plot in Hypatia; The novel consists of the most part of a series of incidents designed to show the effects of different systems of belief on the minds and actions of their devotees. The familiar device adopted by the writer of bringing an innocent youth, who has grown up in seclusion, into the midst of a worldly, luxurious

society, shows that his main concern is to describe the extravagancies of that society by showing how it appears to the impressionable and unsophisticated young man. Accordingly Philammon comes in contact with the bigoted Cyril and his monks, Hypatia, the champion of pagan philosophy, and Raphael Ben-Ezra, the outwardly cynical, and inwardly a serious thinker. He witnesses the turbulence of the Alexandrian mob, largely caused by their partisanship in the quarrels of the Church and devotees of pagan philosophy, and extravagant and shocking spectacles, such as that presented in the theatre, But the thread of unity provided by the person of Philammon is not always present; he is frequently absent from the scene for longer or shorter periods. The novelist does not confine himself even to representing the life of Alexandria. He leaves it to accompany Raphael Ben-Ezra, to whose wanderings and subsequent conversion too much space appears to be devoted. But Kingsley was more anxious to serve a moral purpose by showing the conversion of the Jew, than to observe strict construction in his plot. Again, a part of the story is occupied by the conspiracy of Orestes to take advantage of the revolt of Heraclian and proclaim himself emperor of the South, and his persuading Hypatia to agree to become Empress on condition of restoring paganism. Cyril, at the same time, carries on his intrigues against the faithless Prefect and the pagan Hypatia and is instrumental in instigating the mob to send her to a cruel death. This intrigue and counter-intrigue are not woven into a plot but presented in successive episodes. There is little inevitability in the plot, that is one event naturally happening owing to an antecedent cause. Like the society it deals with it is too confused. We have not

in Hypatia a plot constructed by a skilful blending of fictitious elements with an important historical event or series of events. Most of the incidents are fictitious, but after all the incidents in Hypatia striking as they sometimes are and dramatically described as they may be, are, as it were engulfed in the general description of the life of the time. The basis of the plot, the experiences of Philammon, his mental and spiritual vicissitudes, his discovery of his sister, and his retirement again to monastic seclusion forms a weak foundation for the mighty superstructure that is raised upon it. There is too much division of interest in the plot also, since at least half a dozen of the characters, Hypatia, Raphael Ben-Ezra, Orestes, Cyril, Philammon and Pelagia, are of capital importance. But the weakness of the plot of Hypatia is due to the fact that it attempts primarily to portray the life of a cosmopolitan city with its rival systems of philosophy and religion, rather than to weave together a series of incidents affecting the relationship of a group of leading characters.

Hypatia is the heroine of the story, but the interest of the work does not depend chiefly on her. For she is not altogether an attractive personality. Kingsley has somehow failed to give her charm, though he has given her a beautiful body, and a splendid intellect. She is too cold, and too visionary. The conversation in which the Prefect bends her to his will, at the cost of the sacrifice of her pride, and of her philosophical and religious convictions, diminishes greatly our admiration for her. Her own dreadful fate is contemplated with less emotion, when we

have seen her witnessing the slaughter of the Libyans in the theatre [~~Pater in~~ Marius the Epicurean represent Marcus Aurelius as attending a gladiatorial show at ~~which~~ he does not look, and enduring its atrocities with philosophic equanimity)] not indeed from innate cruelty, but at the command of ambition, urged by the voice of one whom she despised, but whose anticipated throne she is resolved to share. Hypatia would have married Orestes in the hope of restoring the old Greek faith, though she is as passionless as he is faithless. She remains a woman without warmth of heart, without heat even of intellect. She cannot, therefore, impart movement to the figures of the drama around her and centring in her.

If the interest of the work lies not chiefly in the heroine, it is still less so in Philammon the apparent hero. He is something of a conventional hero; a young and inexperienced man, naive and impressionable, — an excellent mirror for characters of stronger individuality. Because he is impressionable, his reactions convey to the reader the conflicting intellectual and spiritual forces that beset the minds and souls of men in that age. Philammon is not the type of hero who influences the course of the story by his actions. Like Scott's heroes he does not dominate the story, because he does not influence its development. Like them he is made for the story; the story is not designed for him. He plays a more passive role; he is more notable for his reactions and sufferings than for his actions, although he is admittedly a young man of courage and generous instincts. Because he is a virtuous young man his struggles with evil are all the more strenuous and the prevalence of evil among Christians

as well as heathens pains him extremely. Philammon comes in contact with the other characters of varying beliefs and being impressionable he is able to reflect on their ideas and to estimate their value. He is not remarkable in himself, because his character is as yet unformed, and it is not surprising that placed in Alexandria in the midst of a chaos of creeds, races and ideas he should oscillate from one belief to another and finally retire to his former seclusion.

The true hero of the book is Raphael Aben-Ezra. In him are exemplified the struggles of a refined intellect to attain truth amid the errors which encumbered it in a degenerate age. He is one of those powerful characters with which Kingsley is most successful. His own sympathies clearly lie with natures daring and robust both in mind and body. Raphael cannot conceal the weakness of his philosophy by suffusing them with sentimentalism, as Hypatia does. His mind is too critical to see anything but fancy in allegorical mathematics and spiritual significance in the petals of the flowers of Isis. Unlike the ordinary sceptic he sees both sides of a question fully, and he pushes scepticism to the logical point of doubting his own doubts. When he is confronted for the first time with a consistent Christian life he is able to estimate its value with a mind free of any kind of prejudices, whether those of scepticism or faith. Such a character as that of Raphael engages our respect even from the first, and at length our deep sympathy. But the character of his mother, the sooth-sayer, almost the prophetess, the daughter of Solomon, is blended with so much that is revolting that its

dignity is lost; one retains only disgust, which makes one regret to find in her the mother of Raphael, the finest character in Hypatia. Yet in converting the Jew to Christianity, Kingsley wrote for his own day and valued purpose more than art. There is much in common between this cynical yet fascinating character and Lancelot Smith in Yeast and Sidonia in Disraeli's Connigsby (1844) and Tancred (1847).

In poor, pretty Pelagia, we have another character more convincing and winning than the heroine. She is certainly not a better woman than Hypatia; but she is more lovable and does not make Hypatia's fatal mistake of trying to transcend her own nature. She is faithful to her stupid but honest Goth, kind to every one else, and willing to see people happy even if they are not virtuous. When she is awakened to the fact that she and Philammon are sister and brother, she tries hard to let the monk bring her to a conviction of sin. But though she is a good enough Christian to believe in hell, she also believes in God, and thinks He will consider the peculiar circumstances under which she remains constant to Amal, whom the custom of the Goth's tribe will not suffer to marry her. Though she is frivolous, and pleasure-loving, Pelagia displays many good qualities that indicate the possibility of her redemption.

Other characters, like Cyril, the proud archbishop of Alexandria, with his worldly heart and sanctimonious tongue, with his great capacity for business and for hatred, alike enormous, - Orestes, the Prefect indolent and only aroused to action by the hope of empire, but, who, when aroused, works with much cunning and little principle, - Victoria, the noble Christian, whose

bright faith gives Aben-Ezra a hope and an aim in life - the careless Amalric, the more thoughtful Wulf, - all these are creations of a high order of merit.

But possibly the most interesting character in Hypatia, although he stands rather outside the main story, is Synesius, bishop of Cyrene, because he resembles Kingsley himself in his physical exuberances. According to Mrs Kingsley Lancelot Smith in Yeast depicts Kingsley himself as an undergraduate. It is likely that Kingsley gives here another representation of himself. Be that as it may, it is clear that Synesius is more like a Hampshire parson than an African; and when we are told that he was " a true son of the saddle."[1] We can easily imagine him riding to hounds with the Squire. Synesius is delineated in a remarkably vivid and life-like fashion: " up at four in the morning, always in the most disgustingly good health and spirits, farming, coursing, shooting, riding over hedge and ditch after rascally black robbers; preaching, intriguing, borrowing money; baptizing and excommunicating, bullying that bully Andronicus; comforting old women, and giving pretty girls dowries; scribbling one half hour on philosophy, and the next on farriery; sitting up all night writing hymns and drinking strong liquors; off again on horseback at four the next morning; and talking by the hour all the while about philosophic abstraction from the mundane tempest."[2] It would be natural to conclude that Kingsley's sketch of that personage as the "Squire Bishop" was freely coloured from fancy, if we did not know that he spent one whole day in searching the four folio

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1. See Hypatia vol. ii. Chap. xxi "The Squire Bishop."
2. See Hypatia vol. i, P.36.

volumes of Synesius for a single fact, and if we had not his lectures too to guide us.

It may be that Kingsley's work has not the full knowledge of a period George Eliot shows in Romola, far less the consummate style and setting of Esmond; and perhaps in some respects it can not challenge comparison with even weaker works of Thackeray than Esmond. Yet the story maintains a high level of sustained energy and enthusiasm. Its pictures vividly impress the imagination. Whether the solitude of the Thebaid is described with its lonely spiritual heroisms or the busy Egyptian port, with its fierce hatred and its cruel fanaticisma, the people, scenes, and incidents, all are living, animated and imprint themselves indelibly upon the memory. It is probably in the animation of its style, in the brilliance and colour of its scenes that, in the last analysis, the greatness of Hypatia consists. The historical characters are not presented so fully and intimately as in the novels of Scott and there is not the accumulation of details which suggests the social background clearly as in the novels of Thackeray. Nor is there the rapid, impressionistic description of scenes that we find in Dickens. But Kingsley shows a remarkable sustained energy in handling the theme and invests it with so much enthusiasm that it seldom suffers from the dullness one expects in works where religious and philosophical elements are treated at length. Perhaps philososphic discussions do play too large a part in Hypatia but Kingsley always makes such issues important and capable of influencing the lives of men.

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Westward Ho! is Kingsley's second and most popular historical novel. It was written in 1854 during the progress of the Crimean war and the illness of his wife. Perhaps it might not have been written at all, had it not been for these two events. Kingsley spent the spring and winter at Torquay on account of his wife's illness. Here he was living amidst the stirring influences of the West country that he loved so intensely and the historical associations of his new home suggested the theme of Westward Ho! In the meanwhile, the Crimean war, into which the British government had drifted exposed the inefficiency of the British Military leaders, and the sufferings which were endured by the soldiers in consequence, roused indignation among the people. This war caused Kingsley great anxiety. He came from an ancient family of soldiers and his martial spirit prompted him to make a contribution to the cause. He felt that the country needed to be spurred on, and that every encouragement which could be given would be of real service. Hence he wrote a tract, Brave Words to Brave Soldiers and Sailors, of which many thousand copies were sent to the Crimea. Later he wrote: " This war would have made me half mad if I had let it. It seemed so dreadful to hear of those Alma heights being taken and not to be there; but God knows best; and I suppose I am not fit for such brave work..... but I can fight with my pen still.....not in controversy, but in writing books which will make others fight. This one is to be called Westward Ho![1] " Again he wrote: "It is a sanguinary book, perhaps containing doctrines profitable for these times."[2]

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1. Kingsley Letters etc. P.162 (To Frederic Denison)
2. Ibid (To Thomas Hughes).

Westward Ho! appeared in April 1855 and met with considerable success from the first. It was favourably reviewed by some critics who acclaimed it as the greatest historical novel in English on that period. But others were so antagonised by its religious bias that they could discern little or no merit in the work. An anonymous reviewer in Blackwood's Magazine for instance, declared that Kingsley's picture of English society, thought, and feeling were utterly at variance with historical records and with the voluminous evidence afforded by the works of the authors of the period. The whole novel is accordingly, this reviewer says, "a huge anachronism - the character, except in name, belong to the age of Cromwell rather than of Elizabeth".[1] There is a considerable amount of truth in this criticism, although it is too sweeping on the whole, Sir Richard Grenville, for example, is more of a Puritan gentleman than an Elizabethan seaman and Salvation Yeo resembles ~~those~~ the troopers of Cromwell. [whose religious enthusiasm led them to talk in Biblical language and adopt a few verses of the Scripture for their Christian names.] But the nautical atmosphere is Elizabethan, and on the whole it is by idealising and magnifying that age itself rather than by describing it in terms of another that Kingsley produces a misleading impression.

The historical basis of the novel rests mainly upon a few well-known sources, such as the collection of voyages Harkluyt entitles Principal Navigations, Voyages, ~~Traffigues~~, and Discoveries of the English Nation, (1589), Raleigh's Discovery

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1. Blackwood's Magazine June 1855. P. 627.

of Guiana (1596), Spenser's View of the Present State of Ireland (1596), Purchas's Pilgrims (1613), Camden's Annals of Elizabeth (1615), Fuller's Worthies of England (1661), and Prince's Worthies of Devon (1701). The last two he studied to such good purpose that the whole story of John Oxenham as it appears in Westward Ho!, may be accepted as a statement of fact. From these sources he obtained his details of Sturkeley's life and death, of the disasters which befell Richard Hawkin and of the history of Bideford Bridge. Prescott's History of Ferdinand and Isabella (1845), History of the Conquest of Mexico (1843) and History of the Conquest of Peru (1847) provided materials for much of the South American part of the novel. Besides this, no great research is shown. Kingsley admitted that he wrote the book "without any access to town records, or to state papers, chiefly by the light of dear old Hakluyt,"[1] and that he obtained the suggestion for the novel and much of the material from his brother-in-law, Froude, although the historian's great work,[2] had not then been published.

In Westward Ho![1] Kingsley was animated by a didactic purpose, as he was in Hypatia. He attempted to describe the atrocities and cruelties caused by an arrogant and intolerant ecclesiasticism, but his main intention was to encourage and stimulate his fellow-countrymen by describing their forebears' achievements at, what he conceived to be, the period of their most glorious manifestation, namely the reign of Queen Elizabeth. If the lurid scenes of Hypatia with all its fanaticism and barbarity arouse an impression

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1. See his letter to J. Cole on Jan. 7, 1866.
2. Froude's English Seamen in the Sixteenth Century (1895).

1. For its sources see Appendix B: III, P. 405

of tragedy, Kingsley's eulogies of the Elizabethan sailors and glowing accounts of their bravery in action give Westward Ho! something of the spirit of the epic. The writer of an epic accepts legends or popular versions of historical episodes; his heroes are the national heroes and he magnifies their virtues and their prowess on the field of battle. Perhaps this simplicity of outlook is not characteristic of Homer's Iliad and Odyssey or of a more sophisticated epic, like Milton's Paradise Lost, but it is of primitive ones of the type of Beowulf, and still more of the later romances, such as those of the Arthurian cycle and those dealing with the peers of Charlemague. Kingsley regarded the struggle between Roman Catholicism and Protestantisn as one of epic dimensions, as a conflict between the powers of darkness and of light. He extols the virtues of his heroes, Grenville, Raleigh, Drake, Sir Humphrey Gilbert, etc. as vigorously and perhaps as blindly as the writer of any epic ever did. Those on the other side are sometimes men of courage and sincerity, but their good qualities are nullified by their cunning and arrogance, and sometimes they are merely monsters. In any case the issue is always clear between good and evil, that is between England and Spain, and Kingsley uses all his verbal and intellectual energies to glorify and exalt the champions of the good and to belabour heartily the minions of evil. This simple and honest partisanship may detract from the book's merits as an historical novel, but it certainly gives it an epic gusto. In its spirited descriptions of encounters on sea and land and in the hero's quest for El Dorado Westward Ho! has the adventurous zest and the touch of

romance that are found in epics and medieval romances.

As far as the historical background of Westward Ho! is concerned Kingsley seems to have been anxious to revive, what he imagines to be, the spirit of the age rather than the letter. Though Westward Ho! does suggest the palmy days of Elizabeth, as they were generally regarded in Victorian times, one finds on closer analysis that its historical background is very limited. Kingsley achieves his effects mainly by grouping together the best-known of the great sailors and courtiers alluding to the chief voyages, and incorporating an event of cardinal importance like the Armada. All this serves to give the right atmosphere to the story and Kingsley had read enough in Hakluyt's Voyages and other sources to make his accounts of the fighting against the Spaniards quite in keeping with the setting. But it is mainly on maritime adventure and expansion that Kingsley concentrates, and because this is the activity of the Elizabethans that has gained most hold on the popular mind, it is often believed that Kingsley's picture of Elizabethan life is one of uncommon breadth. But in spite of his concern with the religious issue at stake, he shows Protestantism mostly as it was represented by hard-fighting, ignorant, swearing sailors. There is not much indication of how religious questions affected the mass of the people, beyond those muscular Christians with whom prayer was often the prelude to hewing down the Amalekites. Nor does Kingsley pay much attention to the social conditions of the people, save to imply that they were flourishing and happy in this greatest of reigns. He romanticised the period and introduced a little too much of the "Merrie England" tone. "For

they (the English) were, in the first place, with fewer luxuries than we, but more abundant necessaries; and while beef, ale, and good woollen clothes could be obtained in plenty, without over-working either body or soul, men had time to amuse themselves with something more intellectual than mere toping in pot-houses".[1] Political affairs play practically no part at all in the story; the hostility of Spain and England is ascribed to religious differences and economic rivalry. None of the great politicians of the time, except Raleigh, so far as he can be called a politian appear in the pages of Westward Ho! Men of letters, such as Spenser, Sir Philip Sidney and Sir Walter Raleigh, appear but they are men of action as well. A half-hearted attempt is made to imitate Euphuism and to reproduce the affected but clever badinage we get in the early plays of Shakespeare, or in such a character as Sir Piercie Shafton in Scott's The Monastery (1820). Occasionally Kingsley does describe the costume of characters, but he is not at the same pains to reproduce to externals of his period as Scott is by such means as the description of costume, buildings, furniture, customs, means of travelling, etc. what Kingsley does is to take that aspect of Elizabethan life, namely maritime adventure. That offered most opportunites for a story of daring actions and for gratifying his antipathy to Roman Catholicism.

Indeed, this purpose practically determines the historical incidents that are introduced into Westward Ho! And incidents which are definitely historical are not numerous in the novel.

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1. Westward Ho! (Macmillan ed. 1881) pp. 55-6.

Allusions are made to Drake's voyage round the world, Sir Humphrey Gilbert's death at sea, and Drake's raid on Cadiz but they are not directly described. The fighting at Smerwick in Ireland and the defeat of the Armada are the two main authentic historical events included in the book. The miserable condition of Ireland Kingsley implies was due to the hold possessed by the Jesuits over the people. This must have been his principal object in introducing the Irish campaign in Westward Ho!, for it has no relation to the maritime adventures which occupy the rest of the noval and its only relevance to the main plot consists in Aymas's capture of Don Guzman and sending him to Bideford. Kingsley's view of Irish affairs was presumably coloured by Spenser's descriptions in the State of Ireland. The following criticism by W.B. Yeats of Spenser's attitude to Ireland applies equally well to Kingsley and might even be extended to his treatment of Roman Catholicism. "Nor did he ever understand the people he lived among or the historical events that were changing all things about him. Lord Grey de Wilton had been recalled almost immediately, but it was his policy, brought over ready-made in his ship, that Spenser advocated throughout all his life, equally in his long prose book the State of Ireland as in the Faerie Queen, where Lord Grey was Artigall and the Iron man the soldiers and executioners by whose hands he worked. Like an hysterical patient he drew a complicated web of inhuman logic out of the bowels of an insufficient premise - there was no right, no law, but that of Elizabeth, and all that opposed her opposed themselves to God, to civilisation, and to all inherited wisdom and courtesy, and should be put to death".[1]

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1. See W.B. Yeat's introduction to Spenser (The Golden Poets Series) XIX-XX.

The Armada, of course, represented the final triumph of Protestantism over the might of Catholicism, and would seem to Kingsley the natural culmination of a story dealing with this religious struggle. Though few actual historical events are introduced, it is remarkable how Kingsley succeeds in suggesting the Elizabethan setting. This is done partly by his constant allusions to the lore of exploration and adventure, the hatred of the Spaniards and the resolve to plunder their ships and settlements, which are popularly believed to have obsessed the minds of Elizabethans, very much in the same way as executions and the guillotine occupy too prominent a place in novels of the French Revolution. Then he introduces a large number of contemporary personages, and sketches them briefly but boldly and vividly enough to give colour to the historical setting. Besides his historical background is sketched in a natural fashion; there is no suggestion of labour, ~~such as one sometimes~~ feels in Scott's ~~conscientious~~ incorporation of antiquarian ~~detail~~. Occasionally he makes brief digression to discuss historical points, such as the reasons for English seamen's success in attacking the larger Spanish galleons, but as a rule he is content to illustrate the life of the period through the sentiments, conversations and actions of his characters, though he does show an irritating habit of breaking out into wandering exclamations on the valour, integrity or godliness of the English sailors.

It is generally admitted that Kingsley's description of the Elizabethan age is thoroughly misleading as far as its religious aspects are concerned. His attitude to Jesuits was so bitterly

uncharitable that no prejudices can justify it. At times Kingsley does hint that there was something admirable in the self-abnegation shown by the Jesuits, but he soon cancels a favourable reference by renewing such charges as servility and unscrupulous lying. His estimate of the Jesuits in particular and of Catholicism in general is plainly a repetition of the traditional ideas of uneducated Protestants. Yet, though Kingsley may have been historically inaccurate in his treatment of the Jesuits, though he resorted to the familiar polemical trick of picking out the faults of individuals and making them representative of the society of Jesus as a whole, it is possible that Kingsley's attitude to Roman Catholicism was shared by a large number of Elizabethans, particularly as it became identified with Spain and Protestantism almost became synonymous with patriotism.

But Catholic traditions were strong in England, a large minority were still Catholic in faith, although the practice of their religion was attended with difficulties. Opposition to Catholicism was probably as much due to its political associations as to deliberate rejection of its doctrines. Certainly Elizabeth's attitude to Catholicism was dictated by political exigencies; her ecclesiastical policy was determined by her desire to make the power of the Crown supreme and not to tolerate a Church whose claims challenged the absolute power of the State. Englishmen in Elizabethan days were not so unanimously opposed to Catholicism as they were to Spain, against whom even the English Catholics took up arms. It is doubtful, however, if Elizabethan seamen were animated by the religious hatred of Spain which Kingsley attributes to them. A few of them may have been; but the majority were

probably like the rioters in Barnaby Rudge, who joined the Crordon Riots for the sake of plundering. Kingsley himself must have been conscious of the weakness of his portrayal of the Elizabethan sailor as a religious zealot, for he found it necessary to justify this by argument to "a generation which does not believe, as Salvation Yeo believed, that fighting the Spaniards was as really fighting in God's battle against evil, as were the wars of Joshua or David".[1] All the same Kingsley admits that the hope of gold and other booty was a strong inducement to the adventurous sailors.

It has been pointed out, with some justice, that Kingsley's characters have more of the spirit of the Roundheads in them than of Elizabeth seamen, except that they are more covetous and greedy, less devoted to an ideal than were the followers of Cromwell. Salvation Yeo, for instance, strongly resembles the stern, fanatical, terrible fighters whose strength lay in the depth of their religious convictions and whose mouths were filled with Biblical language and allusions. But even the hard-fighting Roundheads are generally rather romanticised in historical novels. Sir Richard Grenville, as Kingsley portrays him, might well have sat for a Puritan gentleman such as Colonel Hutchinson. In their courage, daring, fighting capacity, and profanity of language Kingsley's seamen seem true to type, but Salvation Yeo is evidently an abnormal case. Kingsley's hyperbolical praise of those religious freebooters becomes ridiculous at times, especially in the oration pronounced on Yeo by Amyas, which is

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1. Westward Ho! Vol. ii p. 23.

manifestly absurd.

Violent as Kingsley's denunciation of the Jesuits may be, there is reason to believe that his view of Parsons (Campion he deals with less harshly) might have been shared by Elizabethan Protestants. In a Parliamentary debate in 1851 Parsons was described as "a lurking wolf".[1] His defence of the theory and his practice of equivocation[2] gained him an unenviable reputation exposing him to charges of falsehood and duplicity. The well-known passage in Macbeth. "Faith, here's an equivocator, that could swear in both the scales against either scale; who committed treason enough for God's sake, yet could not equivocate to heaven,"[3] may have some reference to Parsons's theories on equivocation; though in some editions[4] it is said to refer to Henry Garnet, who was tried in 1606 for complicity in the Gunpowder Plot. But in the Arden edition[5] equivocation is explained as a Jesuit by Warkurton. It is generally admitted also that Parsons was impetuous and self-willed and a man of inveterate prejudices. Besides his single-minded aim of restoring England to the Catholic faith by the agency of a Spanish invasion would naturally excite the wrath of a patriot like Kingsley. Campion however, was a man of much

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1. See Dictionary of National Biography XLIII. 417.
2. Parsons published in 1607 "A treatise tending to imtigation tovvards Catholike - subiects in England...Against the Seditious Wrytings of Thomas Morton, minister. The second part of this treatise deals with equivocation.
3. See Macbeth, Act ll. scene lll.
4. Macbeth edited by M. Alderton Pink, in "The New Eversley Shakespeare" (1935).
5. See Macbeth (Arden edition) P.55. Note on "equivocator".

nobler qualities than Parsons, and, if Kingsley fails to do justice to his sincerity, he, at least refrains from blackening his character.

A more glaring instance of Kingsley's perversion of history is to be found in his portrait of Sir Richard Grenville, who appears as a wise and experienced patron of daring young men, such as Amyas. But Grenville's first voyage was not made till 1585, some time after Amyas is supposed to have begun his adventurous career. He was more of a politician than a sailor. Moreover, Kingsley's flattering estimate of him was not shared by his contemporaries. In a letter to Walsingham, Lane describes him as a man "of intolerable pride and insatiable ambition".[1] Another contemporary Linschoten, a sailor, says that Grenville was "very unquiet in his mind and greatly affected to war.... of nature very severe, so that his own people hated him for his fierceness and spoke very hardly of him."[2] But Linschoten grants that he was also a man of "great and stout carriage", who "had performed many valiant acts, and was greatly feared in these islands (Azores)"[3]. There is no doubt about his courage, but Tennyson exaggerates the significance of his last desperate struggle with an overwhelmingly powerful Spanish fleet. It was asserted by contemporaries that the loss of his ship, his men and his life was due to his reckless obstinacy and his refusal to obey the orders of his commanding officer. On the whole there seems to be no justification for Kingsley's panegyric of Grenville.

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1. Dictionary of National Biography xxiii, 136.
2. Ibid., 124.
3. Ibid.

Indeed, Kingsley's praise is often as dangerous as his abuse. It is difficult to recognise in the Raleigh of Westward Ho! anything approaching the Raleigh of real life. The rough sea-dog, Drake, is almost endowed with the virtues of a medieval saint. Queen Elizabeth is represented as the incarnation of goodness and wisdom, whilst during her storming reign we are informed that those who lived through it were the freest subjects England had ever seen.

Nevertheless, Kingsley was still careful throughout to keep to the strict order and dates of history, with only very unimportant lapses:[1] not indulging in the large licence of Scott, who never hesitated to rearrange historical events to suit the exigencies of fiction. In reading Scott's novels we always find fiction first and history a useful auxiliary. So Scott used historical facts without too close regard to dates or to the sequence of events. Thus we find abundant anarchronisms in Kenilworth, and only a few in Westward Ho! and none are of any importance in the development of the story.

If the plot of Hypatia is not distinguished by compactness and neatness of structure, that of Westward Ho! is still less so. Admittedly for an adventurous story of an epic spirit a plot of mechanical precision is not necessary nor even perhaps desirable But the plot of Westward Ho! is much more rambling than it need have been and is determined more by Kingsley's desire to illustrate the enormities of the Spanish Catholics and their discomfiture by

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1. Amyas Leigh uses the name Bobadils (chap.v) and Raleigh repeats it (chap. IX). Frank uses Hurlethurumbo (chap. II) - both names belong to later periods. The author has also incorrect reference to Christopher Marlowe (chap. XVI), Budxus (chap.II) and the negotiations for the marriage of Elizabeth with the Duke of Anjon (chap. X).

the English Protestants than by artistic considerations. At the very beginning its defective structure becomes evident, for it has a double beginning, giving one the impression that the first has been a false start, and indeed, it would have been no great loss to the story had it been omitted. Moreover, a lack of proportion is apparent in Kingsley's handling of incidents. The episode in which the two Jesuits, Parsons and Campion, are captured in the guise of two Welsh gentlemen is described at considerable length. It reveals Kingsley's antipathy to the Jesuits, but it has little bearing on the fortunes of Amyas or the other characters. From the lengthy account which the writer gives of the wooing of Rose Salterne by the Spanish nobleman Don Guzman, one assumes that their elopement is to be a point of cardinal importance in the plot, that her pursuit and possible rescue will form the main motive of the rest of the story. But, although her disappearance with the Spaniard provides the occasion for the sailing of Amyas and Frank to the Spanish Main and leads them into a situation, which proves fatal to the latter, the attempts to rescue Rose is soon dropped. It is difficult to see why Kingsley spent so much time over the courtship of Rose by the Spaniard (for the analysis of the emotions of characters in such a situation was not his strong point), when he does not follow up this motive to the bitter end, as it were. Normally in an adventure story in which such a love interest had once been raised Amyas would have persisted in spite of heavy odds in the attempt to rescue Rose and Frank. But he and his men wander away on a hunt for El Dorado, which Kingsley is at

some pains to prove can hardly have appeared as a wild-goose chase to men in that age. Besides it was necessary to sacrifice Rose and Frank as victims to the Inquisition to give the reader some indication of the atrocities committed by it in the name of religion. Brilliant and colourful as Kingsley's descriptions of South American scenery may be the description of Aymas wanderings in search of El Dorado is inordinately long and the introduction of Ayacanora is superfluous. However her introduction may be intended to link Aymas's story with that of John Oxenham, who is earlier the hero of a digression, which plainly has no organic connection with the rest of the novel. Its only justification from Kingsley's point of view is that it adds another black mark to the devilish record of the Spaniards. Even the historical parts of the novel are not very well connected. There is generally a lapse of time between them over which no attempt is made to throw a bridge and they are widely separated in locality.

[Perhaps one should not judge the construction of the plot of an historical novel by too rigid standards, but Scott usually has the historical events well connected, one leading to another, whereas, in Westward Ho! the historical incidents are almost entirely episodic. Thackeray also in the Virginians, for instance, introduces historical events in a fashion as loose as Kingsley, but Dickens in A Tale of Two Cities presents the historical background in a more impressionistic and dramatic manner. Kingsley was perhaps too anxious to interpret the Elizabethan age according to his own lights to care unduly about the requirements of the plot.]

The chief group of characters whose adventures we watch right through the story, is fictitious - Amyas, Frank, Brimblecome,

Don Guzman, Salvation Yeo, Rose Salterne and the rest. Through them we are continually meeting actual historical people - Sir Richard Grenville and Sir Philip Sidney, Parsons and Campion, Raleigh and Spenser, the Gilberts and a number of others. But the historical characters are all subordinate. They appear on the stage but for a very short time, and they do not in any sense influence the course of events. In his conversation with Mrs. Leigh, Raleigh makes a fairly long appearance.[1] On one occasion he soliloquises at length. He attends the council of War held by the Irish Lord-Lieutenant Lord Grey. And whenever he appears he is a noted personage. Save for the memorable scene at Plymouth just before the Armada arrived, Drake figures little in the story, although much is heard of him in letters. Some of the historical personages pass quickly in and out within the limits of a single chapter; in this way Kingsley, as Thackeray does in The Virginians brings many actual contemporary figures into the novel. The feast, for instance, on board Drake's old ship the Pelican[2] introduce very cleverly several of the famous men of the day: apart from Raleigh, there are Sir Edward Osborne, the Lord Mayor, The Earl of Cumberland, Richard Hakluyt, Christopher Carlisle, Martin Frobisher, John Davin, Sir Gilbert Peckham, Captain Winter, Mr Towerson, and Sir Philip Sidney. Later in the scene at Plymouth[3] we are introduced to the famous captains who were gathered to meet and destroy the Armada: such as the chivalrous Lord Howard of Effingham, Lord High Admiral of England, Sir Walter Raleigh, Sir Robert Southwell, plain-spoken

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1. See Westward Ho! Chap. XVI.
2. Ibid., Chap. XVI.
3. Ibid., Chap. XXIX.

Sir John Hawkins and Sir Francis Drake. In brief space Kingsley draws thumb-nail sketches of the men who were animated by heroic resolutions, who appear in his pages in all their splendid vitality. But they by no means play a principal part in the story; they are adjuncts merely, a portion of the scenery and setting, which lauds historical reality to the whole.

The subtitle of the book is The voyages and Adventures of Sir Amyas Leigh and naturally Amyas dominated the story throughout. He is like a Homeric hero, large and strong, tall of stature and mighty of appetite. He represents at first Kingsley's ideal school-boy. Hence the ignorant, young savage, Amyas Leigh, though he had never had an object lesson, nor been taught to use his intellectual powers, had learnt things which he would hardly have been taught in 1856 in any school in England; and the narrowness of his information was counterbalanced by the healthiness of his education. Amyas was one who learnt to speak the truth, and who studied the natural world around him; strong to defend the right and to protect the weak. These lessons of boyhood remained with him through life. He was fierce only against the Spaniard, or the Jesuit Eustace who had struck the gentle Frank. He was compassionate to the suffering Indian, gentle to the hermit Conquistadore and chivalrous to the innocent maid Ayacanora. Like most great characters he is both a type and an individual - a type of the Elizabethan seaman, as Kingsley conceived him, daring, bluff, and shrewd, always ready for adventure. And in the peculiar compound he displays of strength and tenderness, of pride and humility, of arrogance and modesty he is an intensly individual figure. He is the embodiment of the ideal Kingsley was always preaching, which

has been nicknamed "muscular Christianity".

The frail Frank is a contrast in body, behaviour, and mind; a far more subtle type. Aymas is a man of action, whereas Frank is a scholar. They represent two of the best types of Elizabethan manhood (sometimes found in combination as in the person of Sir Philip Sidney), the one reminding us of Sir Francis Drake, the other of Spenser. It is the eldest brother Frank who displays the caharacteristics of the cultured gentleman of the Renaissance: minute learning, elegant fashion, delicate fancy, a fastidious sense of honour, deep-seated seriousness of character, and brilliant wit. In Frank we see also traits of character admired by the author. He was brave but he was not fierce. He was loyal to his country and to his love - though he would rather resign Rose altogether than let his own suit be a cause of strife among friends. And he shows himself a knight of medieval devotion when he undertakes the expedition, for which he was so little fitted, in order to bring aid to Rose on the mere suspicion that she had not gone freely away; while the cause of events crowns his devotion with the sacrifice of his life.

The gentle Mrs. Leigh, their mother, seems too gentle. One wonders if Thackeray's Lady Castlewood was the model from which she was drawn. Still she is a noble character: a true Christian, ready to give up even her children at the call of duty, trustful, God-fearing, and resigned to the end. She, like Mrs Hawkins and Lady Grenville, is an illustration of Kingsley's faith in the influence of good women and the nobility of family life.

But there was another branch of the Leigh family, which had remained Catholic. Eustace Leigh, the cousin of Frank and Amyas is

a plotter and a Jesuit. In Eustace, Kingsley has painted the struggles of a dark and jealous spirit cursed with a longing for love and light. Indeed Eustace makes few appearances in the story, but he plays a very important part. Had it not been for Eustace with his love for Rose Salterne, his devotion to the Jesuits, and his relations to Don ~~C~~Guzman, the voyage of the Rose would not have taken place. He is the villain of the story; and through him, directly or indirectly nearly all the mischief is made. Kingsley's chief purpose in introducing the Jesuit villain in the story was to show his own view of Jesuit training and teaching. He paints his Jesuits as sincerely devoted - winning souls in the bogs of Ireland and the neglected regions of England - but incapable of honesty. Indeed, Kingsley has not painted Parsons and Campion in glowing colours, but history has not described them and other Jesuits of the time as such poor creatures as his Eustace Leigh.

Rose Salterne, the heroine, whose beauty drives all the youth of North Devon wild, ~~is a girl we might have in any age. She~~ is simply a pretty doll. Her fluttered musings are, it is true, attractively done; but we have little of her action and conversation that definitely contribute to a knowledge of her character. She is described as a village flirt, courted by all the heroes of the Order of the Rose; but she seems to have no particular outstanding quality to make her a mark of such affection. Yet without her there would be no semblance of a plot.

Don ~~C~~Guzman is a type of the Spanish nobleman of the period. He plays an important part in the story; for without him it would have ended when Amyas came home from his second voyage. Don

Cruzman has fought and voyaged in east and west; he is a soldier, a scholar, and a gentleman. His egotism, national pride, and cunning are relieved by his dauntless valour. Kingsley cleverly balances his union of qualities, and draws for us a credible picture of a Spanish nobleman, one who is not unattractive, but becomes a villain for lack of those severe standards of personal honour and morality that, according to Kingsley, regulated the conduct of a man like Grenville.

Among the fictitious characters there is one, however, who is possibly the most striking, if also the most incredible, in the whole book, namely the sturdy Salvation Yeo. He is a man of daring and courage, obedient and loyal towards superiors, and chivalrous towards women. On the sea, on land, in prison, and in battle, we find him faithful to a promise and a trust. He would go to the rack rather than do violence to his conscience. His story is that of a devoted follower, faithful to his master through good and through ill. But it is the affection of Salvation Yeo for his "little maid" that shows the best of his character, and furnishes some of the most pathetic scenes in the book. Side by side with this tender feeling there lives the old feud against the Spaniards, the desire to fall hip and thigh upon the Amalekites. He is necessary for the plot, as it is his knowledge of the region that guides the Rose in South American Waters. His loyalty to Aymas is unwavering, and it is a fine stroke on the part of Kingsley to make that attachment end with his death by the same flash of lightning that blinded Aymas.

Westward Ho! naturally suggests a comparison with Scott's Kenilworth which is set in practically the same period, but deals with different aspects of Elizabethan life. The two novels are so

different in theme, temper and environment that there is little to indicate indebtedness on the part of Kingsley to Scott's novel, although resemblances, accidental on intentional, may be traced. Scott is little concerned by comparison with the religious background, but the character of Anthony Foster, once a Papist and now a zealous Protestant and en early Puritan, and the distrust with which he is viewed by the habitués of Giles Grosling's Inn provide a glimpse of the religious outlook of the common people. But Scott gives the religious background only by implication, whereas in Kingsley it is the principal feature. Yet Anthony Foster's insincere Puritan jargon may be compared with the sincere Biblical phraseology of Salvation Yeo. In both novels there is a strong suggestion of the superstitutious outlook of the people of the time. Scott embodies more of supernatural elements in the persons of Wayland Smith, the wizard, and Alasco, the astrologer, but Kingsley also introduces Lucy Passmore, who is reputed to be a witch. Again there is a pageant produced at Kenilworth to entertain the Queen, and the people of Bideford produce one of a somewhat similar type to celebrate the return of Amyas Leigh. It is interesting to note also that Kenilworth opens in the inn at Cumnor, and Westward Ho! opens outside an inn in Bideford. Catastrophe occurs in both stories as the result of a legitimate, but secret love-affair.

But beyond such comparatively unimportant resemblances which may be traced in Kenilworth and Westward Ho!, the two novels have not a great deal in common. Westward Ho! is a tale of adventure outside England, for the most part, in which religious passions play an important part. Kenilworth is a story of the intrigues of

countries to win the favour of the Queen. It has a greater emotional depth and shows a powerful courtier harassed by the goad of ambition, jealousy of a hated rival, and the claims of love. Historical figures play an important part and do not walk on merely to provide the right atmosphere for the novel. Queen Elizabeth appears in her own person, the victim of feminine jealousy and vanity, and is not simply the distant object of men's devotion and worship, as she is in Westward Ho!. Raleigh to Kingsley is an energetic and enigmatic adventurer, dreaming of settlements and colonies; to Scott he is the embodiment of youthful and courtly charm. Each novel moves, as it were, in a different sphere and illuminate different aspects of the Elizabethan period. Neither of them may be faultless from the historical point of view, but as a work of art one prefers Kenilworth. The plot is more compact and the interest is placed in the inner lives of the characters, in their emotional conflicts, rather than in their sentiments, prejudices and deeds of prowess. Scott had a much deeper grasp of human character and motives than Kingsley, whose personages in Westward Ho! are conceived on too simple lines. One has only to compare the Leicester with Sir Richard Grenville and Varney with Don Guzman to see how far Scott was superior to Kingsley in portraying characters with sureness and convincing power.

Westward Ho! inevitably raises the question of how far it is permissible for the writer of an historical novel to

misrepresent the period in which his scene is laid and yet succeed in producing a work of acknowledged merit. There is no denying the historical shortcomings of Westward Ho! as far as the general impression it gives of the age concerned; they are of such a nature as to deprive it of historical value. Yet, though it presents a large target for the shafts of the critic, it has been highly esteemed by the general reader, and especially by boys. No doubt this is owing to its element of adventure, the energy and sustained animation of its action. It is, in fact, a superior example of what was known later as the "cloak and sword romance", a type of novel in which the historical background is mainly of importance in so far as it provides opportunities for exciting incidents. Certainly it was far from Kingsley's main purpose to write a novel whose principal merit lay in its element of adventure, though this certainly was part of his object, writing as he was of the heroic deeds of the glorious Elizabethan seamen. But it was fortunate that his capacity to write stirring narrative, to imbue the story with his own energy and enthusiasm, swamped his didactic and controversial intensions; for its vigorous action keeps Westward Ho! alive, in spite of all its defects as a work of art and as an historical novel.

IV.

Hereward the Wake is the least popular and least interesting of Kingsley's historical novels. When he actually began to form the design of the story is unknown. But it is certain that when he lived as a boy at Barnack, Nottinghamshire, he came under the spell of the Fen county, and doubtless heard of Hereward and his mighty deeds. In his prose Idylls, (1873) Kingsley has given us entrancing pictures of that district which he learned to love during his boyhood. He seems to have been prompted originally to attempt the story by his friend Thomas Wright, [1] who did much in his day to popularise British and Irish archaeology. A passage or so from Wright's [2] early account of Hereward shows us how the essayist's estimate affected the later romance of his friend. For the story of Hereward Kingsley does not depend alone upon what he heard of the legends, for he made many excursions to the fens during his residence at Cambridge as a student and later as professor of modern history. In the summer of 1848 he made an expedition to Crowland Abbey near Peterborough, and was so impressed with the venerable Abbey that he made it one of the features of the story.

In 1866, Hereward, which had been appearing for some time in Good Words, was completed. While opinions differ greatly on the merits of this novel, some critics have considered it one of Kingsley's best; but because of the slaughter that is spread over almost every page, it certainly is not one of his pleasantest stories.

1. The story is dedicated to Thomas Wright. See the letter Kingsley wrote to him on the dedication page.

2. Essays on the Literature, Superstitions and History of England in the Middle Ages, 1846. Vol.ii. P. 91. etc.

In preparing to write this work Kingsley made a study of such books as Peterborough version of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, Historia Croyland endis.[1] Historia Eliensis.[2] Estorie des Engles,[3] and Gesta Herewardi Saxonie,[4] It was by no means an easy task to select facts from the many accounts of the exploits of Hereward.[1] Most of these accounts are legendary and of comparatively little historical value. The facts plainly have been freely embellished by the imagination of later generations. According to Freeman in his History of the Norman Conquest, (1871), "all that certain history can say is that a Hereward, most likely the hero of Ely, appears in Domesday as a holder of lands in the Shire of Worcester and Warwick under Norman Lords".[2] Again Freeman writes: " this is the amount of our positive knowledge. Hereward held lands in Lincolnshire; part of them was held of the Abbey of Crowland, of which Abbot Ulfeytel resumed possession because Hereward did not keep his agreement. At some later time, therefore, after 1062, the year of the appointment of Ulfeytel, Hereward fled from the country, but for what cause we are not told. In 1070 and 1071 he appears again as the plunderer of Peterborough, and leader of the outlaws at Ely."[3]

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1. Commonly known by the name of Ingulf, who became Abbot of Croyland in 1086; but certainly forged by the Croyland monks some three hundred years or more afterwards.

2. Compiled towards the close of the twelfth century by certain monks of Ely, two of whom appear to have borne the name of Richard.

3. Written in verse by Geoffrey Gaimar. Hereward is dealt with in a short passage of about 250 lines. This account belongs to the early part of the twelfth century.

4. Written by Richard of Ely, presumably one of the two Richards who wrote the Liber Etiensis.

1. For the sources of Hereward the Wake see Appendix B: III. P. 406.
2. Freeman's History of the Norman Conquest IV. 485.
3. Ibid P.804.

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle contains references to him in it's entries for the years 1070 and 1071. His attack on Peterborough and his defence of Ely are undoubtedly matters of history. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle narrates the visits of the Danish fleet of Osbeorn (Asbiorn) in the spring of 1070 at a time when the neighbourhood of Peterborough was in revolt against the stern rule of the new Norman Abbot Turold (Thorold). Hereward put himself at the head of the tenants of Peterborough Abbey, joined with the Danes and incited them to plunder Peterborough in the absence of Turold. The return of Turold drove the rioters back to their ships and they went to Ely. The Danes soon returned with their plunder while Hereward and many followers encamped in the isle of Ely, where they held out with such success that the fame of their resistance gathered many others who still dared to oppose the Conqueror.[1] The incidents of the siege of the camp of Refuge, as related by Kingsley, are such as we find in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle and other records.

But Kingsley chose the material from the Chronicles that suited his fictitious purposes, whether it was demonstrately accurate or not. For instance, it suited him to represent Hereward as high-born, as the son of Leofric and Godiva; being of noble English descent he would be a natural leader of his people against the conquering Normans. But Freeman vigorously rejects this version of the birth of Hereward[2]. There is no evidence for Hereward's birth beyond the doubtful testimony of the Chronicles. As for the rest of his career even the dates and cause of Hereward's flight, which Kingsley attributes to his feud with the monks of Peterborough are utterly uncertain.[3] Most of the picaresque episodes

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1. See Anglo-Saxon Chronicle ed. by T.A. Giles,(New edition).p.p.149-150.

2. "One tale," he says," the wildest of all, has made the famous outlaw a son of the great Earl Leofric. Romancers probably did not stop to think that this was to make him a brother of Aelfgar, an uncle of Eadwine and Morkere, an uncle by marriage of King Gruffydd and of King Harold " - See Freeman's Norman Conquest iv. 454.

3. Ibid. p. 455.

such as Hereward's visits to the Norman camp in disguise are taken from the Gesta Hereward. Whether he was the leader or not of the English force in Ely is uncertain, but obviously it was necessary to make him so in a novel of which he was the hero. Hereward's end and the manner of his death are differently recorded in various early works. Florence of Worcester says that at the end of the siege of the Camp of Refuge in Ely Hereward escaped through the marshes with a few companions, and that nothing more is known with certainty of the rest of his life. But, according to the Gesta Herewardi , he obtained a pardon from William and died in peace. The Domesday book, however, records a Hereward as a holder of land which Hereward the Wake had possessed in the reign of Edward, and if this entry refers to the same person, Hereward must have been alive in 1086. But Geoffrey Gaimar in his Estorie des Engles gives an account of Hereward's death in which the details are practically the same as those related by Kingsley, down to the remarks of one of Hereward's murderers, Ascetin, that " if there had been three more such men in this realm, they would have driven us and King William back again into the sea". [1]. No doubt, Kingsley followed the facts contained in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, and the story of the hero as told by Ingulf and Gaimar.

Though the historical evidence for the life of Hereward is scanty, Kingsley has made his account plausible enough, and perhaps plausibility rather than absolute accuracy is all we are entitled to expect in an historical novel. And many of the facts, such as the burning of the monastry of Peterborough and the fighting at Ely are authentic. The only point that is in doubt is exactly what part Hereward played in those incidents ? Freeman, as an historian, refuses to go beyond the evidence,

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1. Hereward the Wake (Macmillan edition : 1811) Vol. ii. P.336.

but he admits that the legendary accounts of Hereward may possess a core of truth, though there was no means of verifying them now. He shares Kingsley's admiration of Hereward and believes that the traditional regard for him as a patriotic hero is justified.

Hereward is, in fact, a curious blend of history and romance. In neither Hypatia nor Westward Ho ! does Kingsley take so great care to set forth the historical background. In the Preface of Hypatia he makes some comments on the religion, the philosophy, and the conditions of life obtaining in Alexandria at the beginning of the fifth century; in the introductory remarks to Westward Ho ! he declares his intention of extolling the heroic spirit of the Elizabethian seaman. But in neither does he outline the historical events of the period or make such a display of his authority as he does in Hereward the Wake. He may have felt this historical outline necessary because Hereward's life and deeds were not familiar to the general reader. But was the philosophical and religious controversies of the fifth century in Alexandria any better known to readers of novels ? In Hereward Kingsley seems to have felt the necessity for presenting his historical credentials, so to speak, to show that in spite of the remoteness of the period and the little that is generally known about its personages, the whole novel is erected upon a foundation of fact. And throughout the story Kingsley constantly refers to some chronicle or other or quotes from it. Yet there is a more romantic air about Hereward the Wake than about the other two novels; it is little more than a string of episodes recounting the wanderings and feats of the hero. In fact, though it is much more complicated, its spirit and structure are essentially the same as those of popular English romances, such as Guy of Warwick, Bevis of Hampton, Horn and Havelock. Probably its romantic air is accentuated by the association of Hereward

and his band of outlaws with Robin Hood and his merry men who were veritable heroes of folk tales. Again the chronicles, from which Kingsley took most of his material are, in spite of their customary matter - of - factness, occasionally marked by credulity and super--stition which provide a limit or two at least of romance. Another factor that gives a more romantic character to Hereward the Wake than to Hypatia and Westward Ho! is the comparative lack of motive for adventuring on the part of Hereward. Apart from the Goths, who are minor characters, none of the characters in Hypatia travel in search of adventure. Such violent actions as do occur are motivated by religious fanaticism. In Westward Ho! also strong motives, such as patriotic and religious fervour combined with the hope of gain, account for the voyages of Aymas and his companions. But Hereward becomes an outlaw and wandering knight largely through the unruliness of his disposition and his love of adventure and though patriotic motives are assigned for his resistance to William the Conqueror they seem super--fluous. Like the heroes of Medieval romances he travels in search of adventure, caring little about material things, and animated by such vague motives as honour, chivalry or patriotism or more probably by innate pugnacity. This comparative lack of subtlety in motivation gives Hereward the Wake a more naive spirit than Hypatia and Westward Ho!, which is, however, quite in keeping with the tone of the chronicles from which it was derived and of the popular romances which it resembles.

As an historical romance, Hereward is far less attractive than Westward Ho! For in the latter novel practically all the characters - Drake, Raleigh, Spenser, Hawkins and others - are familiar personages, accounts of whom can be traced in authentic records dating from a comparatively recent period. Their names, accordingly, are being

realities to the reader and impart a convincing air to the story. But the characters who appear in Hereward such as Gilbert of Ghent, Siward, Biorn, and Harold Hardrada, are unfamiliar to the general reader. No certain records of their activities have survived, and in spite of Kingsley's endeavours to convince the reader that there are actual personages and that the narrative of their exploits is not fictitious, one cannot help feeling that the whole story is unreal and almost legendary. Kingsley even takes the trouble of including genealogical tables, but this well-meant industry scarcely serves its purpose of heightening the impression of reality. Had he frankly abandoned the hope of achieving an impossible historical veracity and allowed his imagination freer scope he might have produced a more convincing piece of work. Thus it comes about that the earlier part of the book which tells of Hereward's outlawry for robbing a monastry, his numerous exploits in England and Flanders and his marriage with Torfrida before the landing of William is more attractive than the later in which the story becomes involved in the political details of the subjugation of the country, and deals not only with the climax of the hero's career, the defence of Ely, but also, with his rather inglorious exit.

Kingsley keeps too close to his sources and appears to be too anxious to form a synthesis of the various conflicting accounts that have been given of the activities of Hereward for the plot to have a compact and well constructed form. It has the loose and disconnected structure of the picaresque novel set in an age of valiant fighters instead of cheats and sharpers. The scene changes from one country to another, from the fens, to Scotland, to Cornwall, to Flanders, and back to the Fens, and in all these places Hereward performs a succession of heroic deeds, defeating Knights in combat and rescuing ladies in distress. Had Kingsley

cared more for the structure of his plot than for embodying all the chronicles had to say of Hereward or for displaying the fine qualities of the Teutonic man of action, he would have limited himself to describing Hereward's contest with the Normans, perhaps including a brief introductory chapter to indicate his antecedents. If this resistance to the Normans had been made the pivot of the story, instead of being intro--duced well on towards the middle of the novel, Hereward the Wake would have gained considerably in unity of structure. As it is, there is nothing to link together the previous episodes in which Hereward took part save his own personality. True, he makes the acquaintance of Torfrida in Flanders and meets little Alftruda in Scotland, both of whom play an important role in the story. But his rescuing of the Cornish princess from the disagreeable suitor has nothing to do with the rest of the action. Presumably Kingsley embodied it because he believed that this incident was authentic (he argues in a foot note that it is not legendary), but it is plainly a piece of romance and not history.

The weakness of the plot of Hereward the Wake, judged by orthodox standards of plot-construction, lies in the fact that Kingsley was not primarily concerned with historical events round which a plot could be woven by tracing causes and effects, the reactions of characters to those events and the manner in which their relations are determined by them. Nor does he attempt to introduce fictitious characters whose relations provide a plot, the action of which brings them into contact with historical figures and which can be amplified by the incorporation of historical details. In Westward Ho! the relations of Amyas Leigh, Rose Salterne and Don Guzman provide the basis of a plot, but Kingsley does not develop it as he might have done. The plot of Hereward the Wake is not affected materially by the relations of Hereward, Torfrida and

and humility that form part of the ideal Christian character. "There he stood, staring and dreaming over renown to come, a true pattern of the half-savage hero of those rough times, capable of all vices except cowardice, and capable, too, of all virtues save humility." [1]. In his romantic ambitions of attaining glory and in his self-confidence, which sometimes passes into boasting, Hereward resembles Shakespeare's Hotspur, placed in a ruder age. He may be compared also with the Goths who appear in Hypatia. Like them he is a hard and savage fighter, but sensual and uncontrollable in his passions, although his conduct is regulated by a rough code of honour.

In the undisciplined greatness of his character Hereward illustrates Kingsley's conception of the typical virtues of the Teutonic race and their typical vices, which were the natural result of a way of life still largely uninfluenced by Christianity. Kingsley's admiration for the bold, freedom-loving Teutons may have caught from the writings of Freeman and Carlyle, (the latter's influence is occasionally discernible in Kingsley's style), or it may be due to the contrast they present to enervated, priest-ridden communities. Though Hereward is a good enough representative of the heroic type in his physical courage and moral weak--ness, his character degenerates towards the end, not so much because he succumbs to sensual temptation as because his yielding is not made sufficiently plausible. Hereward suddenly abandons Torfrida and goes to Alftruda. Though this is a complete reversal of his ordinary conduct, the way is not prepared by an account of his previous emotional struggle or by an elaboration of the seductive charms of Alftruda. The reader's attention is diverted to the anguish of the abandoned Torfrida.

Besides Hereward, the characters which call for special remark are

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1. Hereward the Wake. vol. i. p. 85.

are few. Lady Godiva, the wild hero's mother, was the most saintly woman of her day. Her moral courage never falters, though, like the physical courage of her son, it might well have been tempered at times with a cool judgment. In fact her excessive devoutness was responsible for the outlawing of Hereward, and by this means she affects the development of the plot. Her presence also in the Abbey of Crowland helps to persuade the heroine to abandon Hereward and take refuge in its cloisters. Lady Godiva does not appear often in the story, but she is a typical representative of the religious life of the period, in her devoutness in which real faith and superstition are strangely blended. Besides a touching strain of pathos is displayed in her resignation to her changing fortunes.

Abbot Brand, uncle of Hereward, is one of the minor characters, but one worthy of mention. In him we see the best type of monk, stern enough to apply discipline when necessary, but full of human kindness. He sees the possibilities for good in the boy Hereward, more clearly than his mother Godiva. He rebukes Hereward, but helps him, nevertheless. The courage of the man with a Knight's heart and bearing, but with a monk's devotion, is seen in his daring act of knighting Hereward while the latter is still an outlaw.

Martin Lightfoot, though but a pale imitation of Salvation Yeo in Westward Ho! is one of the best characters in the book. Like Salvation Yeo, he shows the same loyalty to his master in prosperity and adversity. He is also charitable to the faults of a suffering woman. Martin was formerly a monk, but he exhibits little signs of religious convictions. With his boldness, courage, and revengeful spirit, he furnishes no small part of the humour in the book, and acts as jester to and guardian of the wild and careless Hereward. When Torfrida is abandoned by Hereward,

Martin protects her and places her in safety in the Abbey Crowland. But in spite of his master's treatment of her, he is still ready to serve him, provided he is not with the usurping Alftruda.

Alftruda is vain, shallow, jealous, covetous, and faithless. When she was but a child of six she loved the outlaw Hereward. Later, in Flanders, when she finds that her hero is married, she marries a man who can maintain her in her proper station, but she lets Hereward know that she still loves him. Though she enters very little into the story, she commands our attention as the outside agency in the downfall of Hereward.

In Torfrida, the author draws an impressive female character of a kind that is wanting in Westward Ho! She is as impressive a heroine as Hypatia, different as she may be in training and acquirements. Together these two characters illustrate how much more successful Kingsley is in portraying female characters in whom beauty is combined with mental and spiritual greatness than in representing those who possess physical charms alone, such as Pelagia, Rose Salterne and Alftruda. Like Hypatia, Torfrida is a woman of striking beauty and considerable mental powers, though in her case a misdirected education has turned her attention to magic and romantic stories instead of anything so wholesome as philosophy. Consequently Hypatia has a more strongly disciplined character than Torfrida, who lives in a less cultured age and lacks the balance imparted by the study of ancient philosophy. It is natural then that Torfrida's nobility of disposition should be manifested rather in an emotional than an intellectual direction. In her love for Hereward she shows as much devotion, constancy, and self-sacrifice as the heroine of any romance. In fact she is a more active and dominating figure than the heroine of romance, who usually remained decorously in the background, while the knights fought for their hand.

fighter, short and abrupt in speech. His pride leads him to commit many brutal deeds, for it is stung by the feeling, that just because he is of humble origin, he has not achieved a social position to which his ability entitles him. It may be that Kingsley is here drawing in monstrous form a type of the grossly materialistic Victorian middle class for which he felt a profound contempt.

In this novel the author seems to have comparatively little of his customary controversial purpose, but he takes the opportunity of glorifying the heroic virtues and the Teutonic stock. Kingsley reverenced the virtue of courage and always strives to show it in a prepossessing light. Hereward, unlike Amyas Leigh ~~and Frank,~~ who shows ~~their~~ his courage by magnanimous acts is courageous in one respect but weak and timid in another. His weakness of character brings his physical strength to nought. Another mixture for which Kingsley had a high regard was loyalty or fidelity to one's duty. Lancelot Smith in Yeast, Tom Thurnall in Two years Ago and Amyas Leigh in Westward Ho! are all endowed in a conspicuous degree with this quality, and illustrate the principle that a man must follow rules of honour and morality, no matter whether he is deeply religious or not. In Hereward this law is exemplified in a negative manner, for after the hero becomes demoralized he becomes a coward as well. The character of the courageous Hereward is gradually undermined by loss of a sense of duty, until he loses his self-respect.

In spite of this illustration of moral rules Hereward is not a didactic novel and the writer's main purpose was to relate a stirring story. But from time to time we find evidence of his desire to provide an antidote to the Romanising tendencies of the Tractarian movement - a purpose which never deserted him, whether he was dealing with the fifth, the eleventh, the sixteenth, or the

nineteenth century. In the preface he takes the opportunity of carrying on the attacks on the Church of Rome he had made in Yeast, Hypatia, and Westward Ho: "Perhaps by no other method could England and with England, Scotland, and in due time Ireland, have become partakers of that classic civilization and learning, the point whereof, for good or for evil, was Rome and the Pope of Rome: but the method was at least wicked, the actors in it, tyrannous, brutal, treacherous, hypocritical; and the conquest of England by William will remain to the end of time a mighty crime abetted -- one may also say made possible as too many such crimes have been before and since -- by the intriguing ambition of the Pope of Rome". [1] However, these attacks are but a side-issue and do not interfere with the drift of the story. His prejudices affect Hereward less than they do his other novels.

~~The one~~ A book which ~~actually~~ naturally presents a comparison with Hereward The Wake is Bulwer Lytton's Harold, The Last of the Saxon Kings. (1843), a romance dealing with the same period. Many of the characters who play a part in Lytton's book are prominent in Hereward. The family of Leofric and Godiva, of whom Hereward, according to one version of his story was the second son, is mentioned, but the name Hereward does not appear. We have in Harold a picture of the insipid Edward the Confessor which is only hinted at in Hereward the Wake; its portrait of William the Conqueror is more convincing, suggesting his craftiness and subtlety better than Kingsley does. Harold ends with the battle of Hastings in 1066, but Hereward does not come into conflict with William till after that year, though the story itself begins in 1054, two years later than the opening of Harold. The life of the court is more

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1. See prelude to Hereward The Wake xiii.

completely depicted by Lytton, but his story drags wearily along. It is over-weighted with history and reads as such, although a piece of romance is woven into the pattern to excite the reader's interest. But a touch of the vigour and energy of Hereward would have quickened the pace of the story in a much needed fashion. Again, apart from William, Lytton does not succeed in presenting the characters and spirit of the time very convincingly.

There is also a certain similarity in theme between Hereward The Wake and Scott's Ivanhoe, since both of them illustrate the hostility between the Normans and Saxons, although they are set in different periods. Hereward describes the last armed resistance of the Saxons to the conquering Normans, whereas in Ivanhoe the racial hostility survives only as an undercurrent of hatred between the ruling aristocracy and the Saxon gentry. Both novels have a symbolic design. Hereward symbolises the defeat of the last English resistance; in Ivanhoe the marriage of Rowena and Ivanhoe symbolises the union of the two races. From the prelude, also, in which Kingsley points out how Scott's novels have romanticised the life of men in the Highlands and laments that no one has done for men in lowland regions, it is plain that he has the example of Scott in mind, although no specific reference is made to Ivanhoe. It is noticeable also that Kingsley sets the stage more carefully in Hereward than he does in the other two historical novels and much in the manner of Scott. His prelude giving a sketch of the history of the time which the novel is meant to illustrate reminds one of Scott's introductions, and there is the same method of referring to authorities and discussing historical details in foot notes.

It is possible also to trace some parallels, conscious or unconscious, in incidents. Ulrica, wild and dishevelled, chanting a hymn, while the castle of Front - de - Boeuf is burning, may have suggested the somewhat similar bearing of Torfrida during Hereward's battle with the Normans. Yet such similarities are of small account in comparison with the wide difference apparent in the setting of the two novels. Ivanhoe, although it is set little more than a century later, has much more of the trappings of medieval romance. In place of Hereward's single combats with warriors, we have formal tourna--ments in which mounted knights take part. The fighting in Hereward takes place in the open air; in Ivanhoe it rages around a strong Norman castle. Both writers refer in a romantic fashion to the life of outlaws, but Hereward, when outlawed, takes to wandering at first and his life later with his band of followers is not as merry as that of Robin Hood and his companions under the greenwood tree, as Scott describes it in Ivanhoe.

But what chiefly differentiates the two novelists is their methods of handling history. Kingsley attempts to include too much, to incorporate all the historical legendary information available about Hereward. Consequently he chose to adopt the chronicle form. With greater wisdom, one thinks, Scott saw that in so remote a period it was better to introduce a large ingredient of fiction. Most of the characters and incidents in Ivanhoe are fictitious or legendary. The plot is much better and more dramatically constructed. The capture and imprisonment of Isaac and Rebecca in Front de Boeuf's castle, its capture, the escape of the Templar with Rebecca to York, her trial, and the tournament to decide her fate are the principal incidents in the story and they are closely connected and possess a

strong dramatic interest. Compared with this natural sequence of events the incidents in Hereward appear extremely disjointed. In the matter of dialogue Kingsley attempts rather more than Scott does. The latter is content as usual to give an archaic flavour to the dialogue without dating it precisely, although he does introduce some Norman-French words, such as "outrecuidance". Kingsley attempts to differentiate the idioms of the Norman and Saxon speakers. The conversation of Hereward, for instance, is plain and usually confined to simple words of Anglo-Saxon origin. But " Lady Godiva, as the constant associate of clerks and monks spoke often an artificial and latinized fashion....."[1] Kingsley appears in Hereward the Wake to have made a more painstaking effort than Scott to embody historical facts, but the more the labour, the less the animation. Scott added a stronger infusion of romance and was more successful.

If Hereward the Wake is the least successful of Kingsley's historical novels, the reason seems to be that it lacks the picturesqueness of Hypatia and the sustained energy of Westward Ho: The setting is drab in comparison with the colourful descriptions of Alexandrian life in Hypatia; a cruder state of society is depicted. Again, when it is compared with Westward Ho!, Kingsley's creative zest seems to have flagged; he has not assimilated the chronicles and passed them through the fire of his imagination in the same way as he has done with Hakluyt's Voyages and the other narratives that formed the historical ground work of Westward Ho! The narrative is clogged too much by references to and quotations from the chronicles. The chronicle method of narrating the experiences of Hereward gives the novel a disjointed form, which is not redeemed by spasmodic brilliance in the description of some scenes, such as Hereward's

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1. Hereward The Wake i. 38.

encounter with the white bear, and the fight with the Normans at the river. Perhaps Hereward the Wake might have been a better work had Kingsley's convictions or prejudices been more actively engaged. True, he shows considerable admiration for the courageous, freedom-loving Viking type, which Hereward exemplifies, but the conflict between the Normans and Saxons was not one of so great magnitude as that between Christianity and ancient philosophy or between Protestantism and ~~Norman~~ Roman Catholicism. Religious issues were not at stake and it was these that stirred Kingsley's enthusiasm to its highest pitch. Occasionally he does find an opportunity of attacking Roman Catholicism in the shape of monasticism, but these attacks are intermittent. Hereward the Wake is much less controversial in tone, and it was chiefly when Kingsley had a case to maintain or to defend that his work glows with the greatest vitality.

V.

Descriptions of natural scenery are conspicuously absent from the historical novels of Dickens[1] and Thackeray, although they occupy a place of great importance in those of Scott. Naturally the scenic background is more vividly painted in those novels of Scott which are set in his native country than in those, like Ivanhoe and Quentin Durward, where the action is carried on amidst less familiar regions. Yet Scott does give a brief and generalised description of the country-side around York in Ivanhoe and around the castle of Tour-les-plessis in Quentin Durward and the descriptions of Swiss scenery in Anne of Gierstein are very effective. Yet not even in Waverley or Rob Roy, when Scott is describing Highland scenery or in old Morality, where the scene is in the Lowlands does he equal the

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1. Not so much, however, from Dickens's other novels.

intimacy and the vividness of Kingsley's verbal sketches of Scenic background, especially in Hereward the Wake where the descriptions of the Fen country form an outstanding feature of the novel. In the first place, Kingsley shows remarkable precision in the selection of vivid details; he describes a scene with the knowledge and accuracy of a naturalist. But this accuracy is combined with a boyish enthusiasm for nature which he conveys to the reader by the exuberance of his descriptions even in Westward Ho! where he describes tropical scenery which he did not know at first-hand. The effect of these descriptions is something like that of Constable's picture of rain, the sight of which, it is said, made Fusali, the Swiss painter, reach for his umbrella. Whether he is describing a foggy morning in the Fens or a luxuriant, richly coloured tropical scene Kingsley can arouse in the reader emotions similar to that excited by the corresponding reality. His best passages of natural description are concerned with forests and glens, marshes and heaths which had made an indelible impression on his mind and which he reproduces almost in a strain of ecstacy. Some admirable remarks are made by Frederic Harrison on this aspect of Kingsley's writings: "When one recalls all that Kingsley has done in the landscape of romance, one is almost inclined to rank him in the single gift of description as first of all the novelists since Scott. Compared with the brilliancy and variety of Kingsley's pictures of country, Bulwer's and Disraeli's are conventional; even those of Dickens are but local; Thackeray and Trollope have no interest in landscape at all, George Eliot's keen interest is not as spontaneous as Kingsley's and Charlotte Bronte's wonderful gift is strictly limited to the narrow field of her own experience. But Kingsley as a landscape

painter, can image to us other continents and many zones, and he carries us to distant climates with astonishing force of reality."[1]

This faculty for describing scenic background graphically is a valuable one for the historical novelist, since it is an element which does not normally change very much with time. But apart from this, it can hardly be said that Kingsley contributed much of intrinsic importance to the historical novel. If we agree that the historical novelist should try to recreate the past with as much approximation to truth as is humanly possible, and consonant with the requirements of art, that he should give concrete shape to facts established by the historian by adding details which are fictitious, but not true, in the sense that they apply to human nature and human relationships at any period, - if these are our criteria, we must regard Kingsley's historical novels with some dubiety. For never since novelists developed a critical attitude towards the past, has any one so misrepresented the ideals, passions and motives of men in any age as Kingsley did.

Admittedly no novelist can travel back in time and appreciate thoroughly the outlook of man in any preceding age; in the historical novel, history is bound from the nature of things to be modernised, as it were. But Kingsley was the first to use past epochs as a means of illustrating contemporary problems, and although it is true that some

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1. Studies in early Victorian Literature. p. 174.

2. Dickens, it is true, shows a didactic intention in Barnby Rudge, but he was more concerned to make past events convey a warning to his contemporaries than to suggest a parrallel between certain situations in the past and in the present.

religious and philosophical questions are perennial, engaging the attention of every generation, yet they always appear in different aspects, and Kingsley had not sufficient physchological insight to appreciate such differences in outlook. His knowledge and creative energy could not offset this bluntness of perception. Kingsley shows in dealing with characters temperamentally and intellectually different from himself. Yet, if we agree to recognise as note--worthy historical novels those which gain an added colour and gusto from the use of a setting more attractive because less realistic than that of contemporary novels, we must regard Kingsley's three historical novels as fine specimens of their kind on account of their unflagging movement, their energy of action, their vitality, and their brilliant descriptions of natural scenery.

CHAPTER V.

The Historical Novel of George Eliot, ROMOLA.[1]

It is surprising that George Eliot should have attempted to write an historical novel, with a setting so picturesque as Florence and belonging to a period so complex as the end of the fifteenth century. Neither her natural disposition nor her habits of thought seemed well adapted for understanding and re-creating the varied pageant of Florentine life. Hitherto her talents as a novelist appeared to lie in the direction of blending childhood and later memories with the fruits of observation and combining them with imaginative elements. Her quiet methods, her humour and her earnestness were admirably adapted for themes like those of Adam Bede (1859) and The Mill On The Floss (1860), but how could they cope with the widely different background against which the drama of Romola is enacted? The result shows that George Eliot was more versatile than her earlier novels would suggest, and that though she here entered a region in which direct experience did not help her, she was still dealing with people and topics with which she had considerable intellectual affinity. To her philosophic mind the Renaissance, and especially the Renaissance in Italy, was perhaps the most important point in man's intellectual history.

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1. For its synopsis see Appendix A.X.

And characters like Savonarola and Romola who earnestly sought the truth and lived by ideals were quite congenial to her.

If the history of its writing is compared with the writing of any of George Eliot's other novels, Romola stands apart as a task and an oppression. Indeed the composition of this novel drew upon her utmost reserves of strength. The results of her diligent research were duly incorporated into her fiction; she studied hard that she might write with ease and assurance, and laboured in the midst of depression that lightness of touch might conceal her effort. But the book left its mark on the author. "The writing of it," Cross remarked, "ploughed into her more than any of her other books."[1] She said she could put her finger on it as marking a well-defined transition in her life. In her own words,"I began it a young woman, I finished it an old woman."[2]

In George Eliot's letters we find a few scattered allusions to Romola, which enable us to follow in a sufficiently definite fashion its inception, its progress, and its completion. It was during a visit to Florence in 1860, after she had finished those novels in which the experiences of her girlhood formed the groundwork, as it were, and was ready to attempt a more ambitious and impersonal theme that the idea of Romola first

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1. Journal 1863, in George Eliot, Life as related in Her Letters and Journals, by J.W.Cross,in three volumes, 1885, vol. ii., P.352.

2. Ibid.

struck her. "I was rather fired," she says, "with the idea of writing a historical romance - scene, Florence; period, the close of the fifteenth century, which was marked by Savonarola's career and martyrdom."[1] But in the meantime, before the echoes of the great success obtained by The Mill On The Floss had died away, she had another sudden inspiration which was in strong contrast with the Florentine idea. It was a story of old-fashioned village life. On the tenth of March, 1861, appeared Silas Marner and this was followed by a second visit to Florence; partly because George Eliot's health was far from good and partly because she was longing to gather local colour for her cherished design.

On this second visit there was less wandering about, but more meditation and more work![2] She was preparing for her new venture, entering thoroughly into the atmosphere of her subject. "It is the habit of my imagination, "she says, "to strive after as full a vision of the medium in which a character moves as of the character itself."[3] This remark is extremely significant, for it shows that to George Eliot the externals of Florentine life were not merely trappings introduced to denote the period of the story, but relevant and indispensable parts of the artistic whole. In this emphasis on the relation between characters and their environment, the visualising of both together, she resembles Balzac who describes his background in great detail.

In this work of preparation and comparison Lewes rendered the greatest possible assistance. He was never weary, "going with me to the Magliabecchian Library, and poking about everywhere on my behalf, I having very little self-help about me of the

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1. Life and Letters, etc. ii. 271-2
2. She wrote, "We (the 'We' includes herself and George Henry Lewes) have been industriously foraging in old street and old books." Life and Letters, etc. ii. 300
3. Ibid. ii 360-361.

pushing and inquiring kind."[1]

Immediately after she returned, she began her studies and the varied reading required for the elaboration of the novel. But its construction proved full of difficulties, often so overwhelming that she felt she no longer knew how to write, that she was no longer capable of inventing a plot, and that she ought to give up her work. Her diary is full of alternating feelings, continual heights of joy and depths of despair."[2] "Read little this morning - my mind dwelling with much depression on the probability or improbability of my achieving the work I wish to do ... I am much afflicted with hopelessness and melancholy just now."[3] So she wrote on July 30th. By August 12th, she had got into a state of so much wretchedness in attempting to concentrate on the construction of her story that she became desperate, saying "I will not think of writing."[4] This resolve did not last, for about a week later the cloud lifted a little. "This morning I conceived the plot of my novel with new distinctness,"[5] she wrote on 20th August, Then,on 4th October, "My mind still worries about my plot, and without any confidence in my ability to do what I want."[6] But on 7th October we find this entry in her journal: "Began the first chapter of my novel (Romola).[7] Yet she was again "so utterly dejected that in walking with George in the park I almost resolved to give up my Italian novel."[8] On 10th November, "The Italian scenes returned upon me with fresh

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1. Life and Letters, etc. ii. 300
2. In fact she suffered in this way more or less all her life.
3. Life and Letters, etc. ii. 311.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid., ii. 313
6. Ibid., ii. 317
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid., ii. 320.

attraction."[1] She went to work in the British Museum, and threw herself into the study of books about Florence, till she could almost see Romola moving about in the streets of Florence like a madonna, and Tito taking an active part in the political intrigues of the old city.

The story was begun in October of the same year, after which the plot was written[2] out in full with the resolution to make several other drafts before really beginning to write the book. Still it made slow progress, as so much reading had to be done, ad hoc reading, which had to be assimilated quickly. When the monthly instalments were begun,[3] they had to be kept up to date. The story was at last completed in the August of 1863.

The reception given to Romola by the Victorian public was rather disappointing. That it should not have appealed to readers nourished on sensational novels was not surprising, but apparently a large number of more intelligent readers found it wearisome. Even Browning and Rossetti, whose knowledge of Italian history and culture made their judgments of value, were not impressed by it. Only a minority recognised its value at once.

In gathering her material for Romola George Eliot had read many works[4] which gave her precise ideas and knowledge of

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1. Life and Letters, etc., ii. 320.
2. On the 12th of December.
3. In Cornhill, July 1862.
4. For the whole list of the books she read, see Life and Letters, ii. 325-326.

This remark is extremely significant, for it shows that to George Eliot the externals of Florentine life were not merely trappings introduced to denote the period of the story, but relevant and indispensable parts of the artistic whole. In this emphasis on the relation between characters and their environment, the visualising of both together, she resembles Balzac who describes his background in great detail.[1]

Romola differs from the historical novels of previous writers, not only because George Eliot was to some extent an innovator in this branch of fiction by her psychological subtlety, but because her outlook was different from them. She accepted the conventions of the historical novel but imposed her own genius upon them. Any particular period offers a complexity of forces, political, social, intellectual and religious, which the novelist can hardly exhibit in their entirety. What elements he will emphasise depends upon his special interest; he is bound to be more attracted by one aspect of a period than by others and to seek to reveal it more fully. George Eliot introduces political events and makes the fortunes of Romola and Tito depend upon their outcome, but the relations of the Italian States, their bickerings amongst themselves and their intrigues with the French king do not occupy the foreground in Romola. An attempt is made to suggest the social life of the Florentines in the market-place and on other occasions of popular assemblies, but it is not the everyday life of Florence that George Eliot is mainly concerned

1. For its sources see Appendix B: IV. P. 407.

to describe. This, like the careful topographical descriptions of the fifteenth century city, is meant to form a convincing setting for a story where interest is chiefly focussed on philosophical, religious and moral questions and their influence on human lives. In this respect George Eliot is closer to Kingsley and Newman than to Scott, Thackeray or Dickens. Like Kingsley she tries to be more of an interpreter of the mind of a past period than a describer of its outward life, though in neither of them is the latter feature ignored.

Obviously when the writer takes leave of outward appearances that can be recreated from contemporary sources and ventures on an exploration of the philosophic and religious outlook of characters belonging to a previous age, he is in danger of transferring to them his own ideas and beliefs. Any historical novelist is bound to misrepresent the past from the very fact that he sees it in retrospect and knows what happened, but the novelist who focusses attention on philosophical activities and moral conflicts is more prone to do so. Moreover his own age affects his judgment of a former age. George Eliot does not escape this danger. Not that it is improbable that Romola and Tito would have undergone in the fifteenth century the moral experiences through which she makes them pass, but she makes their careers an opportunity for inculcating ideas drawn from the later philosophy of Comte. Again Savanarola's religious faith is imperfectly displayed, too much emphasis being placed on its moral side. George Eliot was like Kingsley, though in a different way, a propagandist. He was a controversialist,

seizing every opportunity to attack his religious opponents and discredit their beliefs and practices by showing their bad effects in the past. George Eliot had a more positive purpose, to persuade her readers of the necessity of self-discipline, obedience to moral rules, and altruism. She was more eclectic than Kingsley and even rather studiously liberal.

George Eliot adopts various, recognised methods of filling in the historical background in Romola. First of all in the proem she sets the scene in the prefatory manner usually employed by Scott, though not perhaps at quite the same length. The reader is not carried directly into the full current of the fifteenth-century Florentine life, but made to realise the difference in setting by viewing the modern city through the eyes of an inhabitant of that period who revisits his former home. Thus topographical changes are indicated, and at the same time in the reflections of the Spirit much of the characteristic outlook of the fifteenth century is suggested. He himself had been a typical business man, cultured, interested in art and literature, stimulated by the Renaissance, aware of the sceptical opinions nourished by it, but yet playing for safety by remaining formally attached to traditional beliefs. This anonymous Spirit was "a man of the fifteenth century, inheriting its strange web of belief and unbelief; of Epicurean levity and fetichistic dread; of pedantic impossible ethics uttered by rote, and crude passions, acted out with childish impulsiveness ...." [1] While this

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1. Quoted from the proem of Romola.

was the attitude of even the educated bourgeois the ordinary people half-believed in the folk-tale of the coming of Pope Angelico who would purify the Church from simony and the lives of the clergy from scandal.

After the general atmosphere of the fifteenth century is conveyed by this Proem the reader is taken straight into the bustle of the market in Florence on a day when the general topic of conversation is the death of Lorenzo de Medici, the head of the powerful family which ruled Florence. Since Tito the young Greek is a stranger to the city, it is natural that much information on its affairs should be given him by the loquacious barber, Nello, who knows everybody and everything of any consequence in Florence. Nello with his rather pretentious conversation larded with euphuisms, illustrates also how with the progress of the Renaissance its learning was being gradually diffused through the strata of society. In the market-place men argue about the preaching of Savonarola who in 1492 has begun to stir Florence by his sermons denouncing evil vehemently but also declaring touchingly the mercy and love of God. But Fra Menico is attacking the teaching of Savonarola and, no doubt, many like the barber are perplexed, although the fiery conviction of Savonarola, his assurance of his divine mission and his confidence derived from his visions ultimately sway his fellow-citizens. From the busy market place we pass to the seclusion of the blind scholar, Bardo de Bardi's house with its rare collection of manuscripts and antiquities. He

typifies the consuming passion for learning and scholarship felt by the old generation which first experienced the full intoxication of recovered classical literature. But in the figure of Bardo de Bardi George Eliot expresses also that feeling which appears to have been cherished at the Renaissance, namely that learning did more than develop one's intellect, that it was a source of power.

In the first book the writer recreates the social background, the life of the people with their costumes, their talk, and their amusements (as in the chapter on the Peasants' Fair), and through the characterisation and direct comments illustrates the intellectual life of the period. But political and religious events are reflected mainly through the conversation of characters and are not described directly until the opening of Book ii, when Florence welcomes Charles VIII of France on November 17th, 1494. His coming has been predicted by Savonarola, although his primary purpose in invading Italy is to attack Naples. The opening chapter of Book ii takes the form of a prefatory historical survey. In it the characters are dropped for the time being and the writer is historian more than novelist. Charles's invasion is one episode in the long-standing rivalry between the Italian city states which leads to complicated diplomatic moves. The Duke of Milan invites him to seize Naples. Just before his coming Piero de Medici has been expelled from Florence and Savonarola becomes virtually dictator. George Eliot describes the pageantry of the welcome given to Charles, but she indicates also the uneasiness and mixed feelings of many of the inhabitants. The linking up of

the fortunes of Tito with the arrival of the French army, with which is the prisoner, Baldassarre, gives an opportunity for a full description of this episode.

When the French King departs after exacting a heavy ransom, the influence of Savonarola is supreme:-"he was rapidly passing in his daily sermons from the general to the special, from telling his hearers that they must postpone their private passions and interest to the public good, to telling them precisely what sort of government they must have in order to promote that good..."[1] After Savonarola induces Romola to return to her husband, he plays a larger share in the action and it is not too much to say that henceforward his affairs become more important in the novel than those of Romola. Naturally this shifting of interest is rather a disadvantage from the point of view of good structure. Political and religious events now overshadow the private affairs of the fictitious characters, since both Romola and Tito are involved in them, the former through her friendship with Savonarola, and the latter through his activities in Florentine politics. Savonarola, after his initial success, has to encounter plots for the restoration of the Medici and the fulminations of Pope Alexander, whose vices he has denounced. Tito is involved in the conspiracy which ends in the execution of five leading citizens, including the aged and noble Bernardo del Nero whom Savonarola refuses to save. How the latter is gradually broken by the influence of Rome, how he ill-advisedly consents to the ordeal by fire, incurs the wrath of the mob, is arrested,

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1. Romola vol.ii, P.37.

tortured, confesses, and retracts form the main theme of the latter part of Romola which culminates in the description of his execution.

There are probably few historical novels which have adhered so strictly to recorded facts, dates, and places as Romola. In fact, it is generally considered an itinerary of Florence, so clearly does it bring before us the old city. The very buildings - the Dumo and the Campanile and many others- rise in their stately grace before those who have never been privileged to see them. The novel is also an authentic historical record of significant events in the city - of its turbulence, its struggle for freedom and independence, its factions with their complicated transitions and changes, its conspiracies and treasons and its classical scholars with their jealousies and triumphs. Savonarola himself towers before us, and his eloquence is reproduced from his own written discourses. The chief fictitious personages, Romola and Tito, Bardo and Baldassare, are all reasonably probable inhabitants of Florence of that day. Even the minor figures with which the canvas is crowded - Tessa, the simple-minded peasant girl, Bratti, the cunning pedlar, Nello, the keen-witted barber, the talkers in the barber's shop and the others, are all credible Florentines of the fifteenth century.

It should, however, be mentioned that some critics who are among those best acquainted with Italian life have never been able to concur in the laudation of Romola. Rossetti, for

instance, did not think that the tone and colour of Italian life in the fifteenth century were caught with that intuitive perception of a bygone age characteristic of a Walter Scott or a Meinhold. The Florentine contemporaries of Savonarola seemed to him nineteenth century men and women dressed up in the costume of the fifteenth. The book, to use his expression, was not "native." And Negri, who wrote an appreciation of George Eliot's genius, condemned the talk of her Florentines as untrue. It is true that, however hard George Eliot tried to go back in thought to the fifteenth century, she could not in reality free herself from the intellectual environment of her own century. But if the truth of this charge is admitted, against what historical novel might it not be urged with equal force? A writer of one particular age and country cannot contemplate the society of another period or country without attributing to it ideas or sentiments or prejudices which belong to his own time but which were foreign to the men of the historical period.

With the possible exception of Adam Bede, none of George Eliot's novels are remarkable for compactness and skilful construction of plot, though Romola is not badly made. But inevitably in an historical novel the writer's difficulties are increased by the number of incidents and of historical personages she has to introduce to draw a full picture of the life and times of Savonarola. Indeed, it is the desire to portray Savonarola fully that more than anything else conditions

the chronology and structure of the plot. The story opens in 1492 when his denunciatory sermons first attract attention. Two more years elapse before the arrival in Florence of Charles VIII, after which Savonarola is seen at the height of his power. Then the final state shows his downfall and execution. Within these chronological limits the drama of Romola and Tito is played out. It may be noted that Romola contributes much less to the development of the plot than Tito does. The latter's escape from the shipwreck, his arrival in Florence, his insinuation of himself into the affections of Bardo de Bardi and Romola, his relations with Baldassarre, his activities in Florentine politics, his plots, and scheming, and finally his murder by the wronged Baldassarre have in themselves the ingredients of a good, if conventional, plot. Moreover, Tito provides more of a link than Romola does with the historical events of the novel. Romola,however noble and interesting her intellectual and spiritual life may be, is more of a passive than an active agent in the plot, though such a role is commonly played by the hero or heroine in an historical novel. Romola is influenced by others instead of influencing them. Thus she is in turn dominated by her father, Tito, and Savonarola, although not quite in the sense that she clings to them without any evidence of native strength of character. But the circumstances which help to determine her life are always brought about by the activities of others.

George Eliot, like Thackeray and Pater, does not quite succeed in fusing the historical and the fictitious elements. The historical events, such as the invasion of Charles VIII, the quarrels of Florence with Pisa, and the schemings of the Medici, though accurately recorded, are not indissolubly connected with the main story. True, they stand out prominently in the background, but the connecting link with the foreground is not always clearly discernible. Moreover the various historical characters, except Savonarola, though each drawn faithfully and accurately, seem isolated from one another as from the fictitious personages, although connecting links are usually provided, by such a method as the presence of one or more of the fictitious characters at historical incidents, as, for instance, Romola at the execution of Savonarola. But one gets the impression that the fictitious and the historical hold the stage in turns. At first the fictitious element is predominant and attention is concentrated on the affairs of Romola and Tito, but as the novel proceeds the historical element comes more into the foreground and occupies an undue share of attention. The invasion of the French army, one thinks, is described at far greater length than its importance for the plot warrants. Baldassarre might have been brought into the scene by some other method. Towards the end the historical events become all important; Tito is killed off a few chapters before the end and Romola remains more or less apart, while Savonarola occupies the front

of the stage.

All this distinctly indicates that, though George Eliot has a touch of Scott's ability to revivify the past, she still lacks something of the vividness and ready mastery with which he makes the reader plunge into the past with as keen an interest as into the present. This can be done fully only if the fictitious characters (who are almost invariably the most attractive or at least those in whose fortunes we are interested) are actually involved in the historical events. In Scott's novels the background is mostly historical and the principal characters are wholly fictitious. But the reader does not notice this grafting: the action is so rapid, the blending of history with fiction is so complete, that he is carried on in spite of himself. But George Eliot hardly succeeds in carrying the burden of her knowledge without difficulty. This is doubtless owing to the book being written not from memory and invention but from material worked up for the purpose of writing an historical novel of Savonarola and his time. Can this be said of Thackeray's or Scott's historical novels? Thackeray was primarily interested in his beloved eighteenth century for its own sake; he steeped his mind in its literature simply for the love of it, and then felt a prompting to give form to his impressions, with the result that his historical novels have an unlaboured air. Nor did Scott have to read laboriously solely for the purpose of writing a novel. "They," said

Scott, speaking of certain imitators, "have to read old books and consult antiquarian collections to get their knowledge. I write because I have long since read such works, and possess, thanks to a strong memory, the information which they have to seek for."[1] It is true that Scott in his historical novels often makes mistakes in the letter, but the spirit gives them life: even if the spirit, too, is sometimes wrong, it is always alive. Although Romola is true to the letter, it is not quite a spirited performance.

It is essential to bear in mind, however, that George Eliot did not intend simply to make her historical setting a reasonably accurate and convincing picture of the period in which the plot is laid. She was attracted by this period, because it gave opportunities for the discussion of intellectual and spiritual questions, rather than by its mere picturesque possibilities. To make a novel the vehicle for the dislay of ideas about life is to run the risk of making it cumbersome or pedantic. One feels that an historical novel is not the best vehicle for such matter. Romola does not escape the faults that spring from an excess of philosophising, but if the ideas it expresses are of cardinal importance to the writer it is only fair to consider it on this ground. Hence Romola must be judged as something more than an historical novel.

Besides giving a picture of Florentine life in the fifteenth century, George Eliot also shows the spirit of the

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1. Journal i. 275.

Renaissance in conflict with Christianity, and then inculcates certain ideas about religion and ethics. The conflict between the Renaissance movement and Christianity at that time was indeed very great. The changes induced by the re-orientation of human thought which the Renaissance involved were becoming strikingly evident. It had inspired enthusiasm for the re-discovered art, literature and philosophy of the classical period. Not that the classics, especially the works of the principal Roman writers, had ever been forgotten, but now Greek learning was revived, and men read the classics in a new spirit, for their artistic and humanistic value, as well as for their bearing on religious revelation and doctrines. But the humanistic outlook of the Renaissance which saw life as an end in itself and not a means to another and higher form of existence, which gave art and literature value for their own sakes and not as handmaidens to spiritual ideals, was bound to come into conflict with religion, which in the Middle Ages was the focus of all the activities of man. By contrast the Renaissance attitude seemed pagan, and there were even deliberate attempts on the part of Lorenzo de Medici and his friends to revive the pagan spirit, to accept Plato as a teacher rather than Jesus. Without much exaggeration it may be said that the rediscovery of classical literature seemed the beginning of a new dispensation to the cultured men of that time. To them the religious devotion of the Middle Ages was exaggerated and had the effect of destroying men's natural zest in life and

delight in the pleasures of the senses, both of which were revived in full measure at the Renaissance. It is obvious that the attitude to life which developed at this time had its dangers. Pride in life can easily degenerate into self-sufficiency and arrogance, and indulgence in the pleasures of the senses can produce moral corruption. The humility and respect for ecclesiastical authority which had been shown by men in medieval days had little place in an ideology which exalted the individual judgment and was keenly critical of authority. Individualism hardened into a self-centred attitude and many who were imbued with Renaissance ideas cared more for their intellectual and sensuous life than for the interests of society, and set little store by the Christian ideal of brotherhood and service. Savonarola wished to emphasise anew and quicken this sense of Christian fellowship and asceticism, but in so doing he was running counter to the tendency of his age. The typical products of the Renaissance cared for self-development; he cared for his fellow-men.

George Eliot admirably contrasts these two movements in their spirit and influence, though she by no means indicates all of their tendencies. Bardo and Baldassarre are supposed to represent the older generation of the Renaissance period - the generation which saw the first revival of learning, loved scholarship for its own sake and also saw it as a source of power. We find a younger generation represented by Dino, Tito, and Romola, who have inherited this scholarship, but find it

inadequate for their wants. Learning is not so much to them as it is to Bardo and Baldassarre, a thing to be valued for its own sake, something to be tasted and enjoyed in the spirit of a connoisseur. They need in addition to scholarship some other outlet for their intellectual energies, such as politics or religion. So Dino turns from it to mystical asceticism, Tito makes full use of it in Florentine politics, and Romola attempts to utilise it for a good purpose, namely to examine the Christian faith as presented to her by Savonarola, and to separate what seemed to her the false elements in that presentation from the true.

Though all these characters manifest George Eliot's sympathy for culture, they also indicate that to her culture was not desirable simply for its own sake. Bardo and Baldassarre who show single-minded devotion to learning show also defects that spring from its selfish pursuit. The former remains aloof from Florentine affairs and Baldassarre struggles vainly against his passion for revenge. Dino's culture results in nothing but a kind of mystical asceticism, and Tito's quick intelligence which assimilates Renaissance ideas so readily cannot prevent his moral downfall. Until Romola is converted by the influence of Savonarola her learning remains sterile. All this indicates that George Eliot wished to contrast sensuousness and asceticism, worldliness and spirituality, individualism and altruism, as social forces. Bardo, Baldassarre and Tito as types of the Renaissance stand for one way of life; while Savonarola and Dino

Apart from its interest as a work of fiction, Romola possesses historic and biographical value in relating the incidents of the rise and fall of one of the greatest of Dominican friars. Professor Villari remarks: "During this quarter of a century few works of any real historic merit have appeared on Savonarola. Of these few, a novel, George Eliot's Romola has been the most celebrated; but although admirable as a work of art, it has contributed no new facts to history, since, as was only natural, its illustrious author accepted established conclusions without dispute."[1] Indeed, George Eliot's portrait of Savonarola is largely drawn from Villari's own biography and she agrees with the latter's estimate of Savonarola as a hero and martyr, one who was animated by the noblest intentions, profoundly religious, endowed with all the moral virtues, seeking always the good of the people, but misled in practical affairs by his intense belief in his own rightness. He regarded himself as a prophet and his ardent imagination made him believe in visions in the light of which he guided his conduct. Villari's work, it may be noted, was a vindication of Savonarola against the derision and attacks of eighteenth century sceptics. He painted a glowing picture of the virtues and ideas of the Dominican monk, and the noble figure which emerged of one living strenuously for the good of others was of the kind that appealed strongly to George Eliot.

The conception of Savonarola as the champion of religion and morality against the pagan values and the sensuous luxuriance of the Renaissance, which appears in Romola, was no doubt borrowed from Villari's biography. Villari wrote the following passage at a later date than Romola, but it conveys succinctly the historic

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1. See the preface to a new edition of his Life and Times of Girolanio Savonarola translated by Linda Villari (2nd ed. 2 vols. London: 1889). P.XXVI.

significance of Savonarola which he tried to express in his work. "In our opinion, Savonarola's historic grandeur consists in his having dared to believe amid general doubt, in having upheld, against the scandals of the Borgia and the scepticism of the philosophers, the derided rights of Christianity, as well as those of liberty and reason. He devoted his energies to the moral renovation of mankind, when others thought solely of man's intellectual renovation; he held virtue to be the assured basis of religion, and the source of true liberty, when all seemed convinced that political and Christian virtue, patriotism and religion were unavoidably and irreconciliably opposed."[1] It is precisely because Savonarola takes his stand on religious and moral values and opposes the trend towards scepticism or religious indifference which the philosophic and aesthetic interests of the Florentines strengthened that his personality and teaching have such a powerful effect on the mind of Romola.

Perhaps George Eliot tends to concentrate too much on the political and moral aspects of Savonarola's career and to neglect his spiritual life. Thus the question of whether he was a good Catholic, as Villari asserts, or a fore-runner of Protestantism as is wrongly claimed by some Protestant writers, scarcely interests her. Probably she recognised the truth of the following passage in Villari's work: "Nor should it be forgotten that Savonarola was essentially and above all things religious, that this was his fundamental characteristic, and even the basis of all his political acts."[2] But it was a sentence like

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1. Villari, PP.XLIV - XLV.
2. Ibid, P.XXVII.

the following, that provided the conception of Savonarola which she elaborated in Romola: "Thus Savonarola's life was spent, and his strength consumed for the moral, political, and material benefit of the Florentines who now condemned him to silence!"[1] Whether the high estimate Villari formed of Savonarola and which George Eliot accepted is justified by the facts of his career has been questioned, but one can see little grounds for holding that it is mistaken. George Eliot devotes comparatively little attention to the prophetic claims, and the visions of Savonarola, the extravagance of which has been emphasised by his critics, but she does not ignore them. Her attitude to his prophecies is that of a rational person who can hardly be expected to attach much importance to them. "Savonarola appeared to believe, and his hearers more or less waveringly believed, that he had a mission like that of the Hebrew prophets, and that the Florentines amongst whom his messages was delivered were in some sense a second chosen people. The idea of prophetic gifts was not a remote one in that age: seers of visions, circumstantial heralds of things to be, were far from uncommon either outside or inside the cloister; but this very fact made Savonarola stand out the more conspicuously as a grand exception."[2] Nor does George Eliot attempt to minimise Savonarola's inability to bear up under physical suffering. That she was aware of Savonarola's weaknesses is especially clear from the description of Romola's interview with him, when she pleads for

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1. Villari's Life and Time of Savonarola, ii.289.
2. Romola, i. 317-8.

Bernardo del Nero's pardon. "But at this moment such feelings were nullified by that hard struggle which made half the tragedy of his life - the struggle of a mind possessed by a never-silent hunger after purity and simplicity, yet caught in a tangle of egoistic demands, false ideas, and difficult outward conditions, that made simplicity impossible."[1] On the whole George Eliot's portrait of Savonarola appears to be well-balanced, dwelling on his essential nobility without concealing his less admirable traits. It is moreoever in agreement with a remark of Machiavelli's, a level-headed observer not inclined to hero-worship: "The Government of Florence having been reconstituted in the year ninety-four by the aid of Fra Girolamo Savonarola, whose writings demonstrate the sagacity, learning, and goodness of his soul."[2]

Romola is among the fairest and noblest of George Eliot's heroines. Her goodness may be a trifle exaggerated and her purity somewhat idealised; but nevertheless she appears quite natural and credible. Her acute intelligence enables her readily to perceive the true and the good, and her strength of will to follow them. Without condoning vice she can be gentle, forbearing and charitable. Romola in many respects resembles Hypatia. Both of them are highly educated and religious. Both are dignified and rather proud. Hypatia, however, is not only cold to her lovers like Philammon and Orestes, but utilises them as instruments for her own purposes. When Romola first falls in love with Tito, she is perhaps more passionate than he is. She is cold to

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1. Romola, ii. 306.
2. Machiavelli - Discorsi, bk.1, chap.XLV, cited in Villari's Preface to Life and Times of Girolanio Savonarola (1889 edition) P.XXV.

him after she has been deceived. Yet she still takes care of Tessa, his mistress. No doubt Romola is not so familiar to us as Maggie Tulliver, but this unfamiliarity is due to the wide difference of country and epoch and circumstances.

Romola's revolt against the binding laws of marriage, when she hears of Tito's deception, rather suggests the rebellion of the writer herself. For George Eliot's union with Lewes being irregular and an act of rebellion against the conventions of society, aroused in her the deepest questionings of love and duty. She never regarded her union in itself as immoral, but to her a loveless marriage appeared extremely immoral. To the end of her life her mind was exercised by the problem, whether she was acting rightly in ignoring a convention she could not regard as sacred, but the disregard of which by the majority of people would lead to social diaaster. George Eliot's own problem becomes that of Romola, and the passages dealing with Romola's relations with her husband were written directly from the writer's experience.

It is clear that Romola in some respects represents George Eliot. First of all, she is a scholarly woman like the writer herself; secondly, the sceptical attitude of Romola towards religious authority was exactly that of George Eliot; thirdly, both the heroine and the writer consider a loveless marriage unbearable, and both feel that, though moral obligations are sacred, rebellion might be justified, too; fourthly and lastly, Romola's conversion from worldliness to a sense of duty and self-sacrifice, no doubt, corresponds to a similar change which George Eliot underwent.

But Romola's dignity, her pride, her intense belief in family traditions were very marked attributes of an Italian noble family at the Renaissance period. Indeed she may be regarded as the Renaissance personified, proud, nothing doubting, if not her own, her father's right to be remembered, and feeling it natural that all things should give way to that just ambition. Again, she never succumbs to any one except once and that only temporarily, to the presence of Savonarola. To her husband she stoops, subduing herself, but the moment he betrays her love, her dignity re-asserts itself, and she appears as immeasurably his superior. Thus Romola is still in one sense a true child of the Renaissance.

Amongst all the villains of fiction few are at heart so debased, so lost to good impulses as the handsome, smiling and popular Tito. He is not, however, an Iago or a Varney. He is selfish and without principles but cultured. He is attractive precisely because his baseness is concealed under a smiling mask, and he has none of the repulsiveness of an ugly monster of iniquity. In the works of older novelists, such as Richardson, in whom the tendency to allegory perhaps still lingered, there is a clear contrast between the hero or the heroine, and the villain. Sometimes, as in Fielding, the hero had enough faults to arouse a sense of fellow-feeling in the minds of the reader, but no sympathy was wasted on the villain. The portrait, however, of Tito is drawn in a more complex and subtle fashion. Tendencies towards good and evil are almost evenly balanced in him up to the time of trial, his reaction to which is of profound psychological interest.

Tito is intended to represent the Renaissance movement on its hedonistic or its aesthetic and social side. His love of ease, pleasure and his unconcern for the morrow is a spirit which the Renaissance created in many of its literary devotees. He lives entirely for self, in the delight of music, art, social intercourse and sensual enjoyment. He is a thorough egoist and hedonist.

But at first Tito is not merely not repellent, but definitely agreeable in person, manner and accomplishments. Yet his light, genial nature seems to possess already the self-centredness and the habit of self-gratification which bring him to ruin. He takes the line of least resistance always. Even in his relations with Tessa he is not diabolically wicked. Her childish admiration amuses him and he has no intention of betraying her, though circumstances induce him later to do so as the easiest way out of a perplexing situation.

In his first encounter with Baldassarre Tito seems to utter the words of repudiation unconsciously, before he becomes aware that the selfish course is the one to which he must adhere. Afterwards his character degenerates rapidly and his actions are all the more base from the fact that they are not motivated by hatred or revenge or by the interests of party or sect. They have no object but his own safety, comfort, and avoidance of trouble. He has nothing against Savonarola when he plots with Dolfo Spini to deliver him to his enemies, but he wishes to get rid of an obstacle to his own advancement. His is not a nature, like that of Iago, which seems to take a malevolent

pleasure in doing evil, and he never indulges in sins which do not increase his own pleasure and well-being. But his inexorable pursuit of self-gratification and self-interest makes a disinterested action impossible and finally destroys his soul.

Indeed, Tito is the elaboration of a character which has a special fascination for George Eliot - the character already sketched in lighter colours in Arthur Donnithorne in Adam Bede and Godfrey Cass in Silas Marner. Their easy-going, pleasure-loving nature brings trouble on themselves and others. But, whereas these two are checked by the rapid consequences of self-indulgence, Tito never stops till he sinks into the abyss of spiritual degradation. Again, Tito strongly suggests Gwendolen Harleth in Daniel Deronda (1874-6). At first Gwendolen takes too strong an interest in her claims to worldly success, but this develops into injustice, hatred, and finally cruelty, just as Tito beginning with the avoidance of irksome obligations slipped rapidly down the moral scale.

Leslie Stephen, probably with Gwendolen in mind, holds "that Tito is thoroughly and to his fingers' end a woman."[1] And his explanation is partly convincing; or rather Tito's characteristics are what - rightly or wrongly - have been called feminine (even when their possessor is a man.) In the attractive Tito there is something of the mercurial quality of Lewes, whose character had some traits usually regarded as feminine. In fact in George Eliot's later novels one aspect or other of the disposition of Lewes is commonly attributed to a man, as in Will Ladislaw in Middlemarch (1871-2) and in Daniel Deronda, which is a largely idealised presentation of Lewes. Tito shows indeed feminine nervousness,

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1. George Eliot (English Men of Letters) P.139.

and when he meets Baldassarre on the steps of the Cathedral, he instantly shows an awestricken face, which commends itself to a painter for the exhibition of the passion of fear. But when he is driven into a corner, his manly qualities display themselves. What he needs is more courage to follow the braver impulses which come to support him against the flow of circumstances and the selfishness of his own nature.

Romola closes with these significant words, which the heroine addresses to Lillo,(Tito's child, but not her own): "And so,my Lillo, if you mean to act nobly and seek to know the best things God has put within reach of man, you must learn to fix your mind on that end, and not on what will happen to you because of it. And remember, if you would choose something lower, and make it the rule of your life to seek your own pleasure and escape from what is disagreeable, calamity might come just the same; and it would be calamity falling on a base mind, which is the one form of sorrow that has no balm in it, and that may well make a man say: 'It would have been better for me, if I had never been born.'"[1] This concluding passage sums up the writer's teaching on the most noble course to be followed in life, and also contains a judgment on Tito. Indeed, sympathy is the keynote of George Eliot's work, the sympathy that results in altruism.

An explanation of her compassion is discoverable in her adoption of Comtism, which teaches that the ruling power within the universal order is Humanity, which Comte elevates to the throne of divinity calling it "Our Providence," and "the Great Being."[2]

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1. See the "Epilogue" in Romola ii, 445.
2. See System of Positive Policy by Augustine Comte, (London: Longmans, Green & Co.1875) ii, 53.

This is different from Christianity, which has both a divine and a human aspect. That is why Savonarola who believed in the divine revelation does not convince Romola by persuading her of its truth. He convinces her by emphasising the commandment to love one's neighbour rather than the injunction to love God.[1]

But George Eliot, like Lewes, never went the full length of Comtism. Her sense of humour, no doubt, prevented her from joining the Positivist Church, and she must have looked with pity upon the sacerdotalism which it borrowed from the Catholic Church. She acknowledged it to be one-sided,[2] but it impressed her more than any other philosophy.[3] She recognised that Comte's exalted idea of humanity carried possibilities of progress for society. His teaching is clearly reflected in her novels, in their theme of the clash of two dominant forces, egoism and altruism. The good of society is impaired by the concentration of individuals on self-gratification, whereas the attempt to discipline oneself and to guide one's actions by the touchstone of the social good will contribute towards the attainment of a higher stage of human progress. Thus Tito is contrasted with Romola, Romola

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1. See Romola Chaps. XL, LIX.
2. See Life and Letters etc., ii. 139.
3. "For all Comte's writing," as Cross tells us,"she had a feeling of high admiration, intense interest, and very deep sympathy. I do not think I ever heard her speak of any writer with a more grateful sense of obligation for enlightment." - Life and Letters, etc., iii, 419.

with Savonarola, Casaubon with Dorothea, Rosamond with Lydgate, Sylva with Zarca, Esther and Harold with Felix and Lyon.

Among the historical novels we have studied, Romola has a close affinity with Hypatia especially through its concern with philosophical and religious questions and through the personages of the heroines. Hypatia places in contrast Christianity and the dying classical philosophy, whereas Romola contrasts Christianity with a revived form of classical philosophy. Marius also presents an antithesis between Christianity and philosophy, while to some extent this is the theme of Gaston de Latour. Yet parallel between Romola and Hypatia cannot be pressed too strongly. The Christianity of Hypatia is imperfect because it breeds fanaticism and intolerance in the minds of its devotees, though of course Kingsley implies that there is a higher and truer Christianity. The Christianity of Romola is imperfect also, not because Savonarola, its representative, is an imperfect being, but because it is mainly the moral side of Christianity that is emphasised. George Eliot's own idea of Christianity was moralistic not mystical or devotional. Classical philosophy again had a different significance to the men of the fifth century and to the men of the Renaissance. In Hypatia it appears as a way of life. Whereas in Romola it is the buttress of individuality, more a part of culture and of educated taste. Both George Eliot and Kingsley show how Christianity and pagan philosophy affect the lives of characters, but their purpose in introducing philosophical and religious elements are different. Kingsley's purpose may have been to show the superiority of Christianity, but in effect Hypatia

serves as a warning against ecclesiastical pride and arrogance. George Eliot's purpose was to include a moral lesson, to show the superiority of altruism to egotism. However, if their purposes are different they both use the historical novel to preach a sermon to their contemporaries.

Both Kingsley and George Eliot took extraordinary pains with their historical settings. George Eliot's descriptions of her setting are more laboured and frigid than those of Kingsley for she lacked the latter's vivid descriptive capacity, his mastery of colour which gives his scenes of Alexandrian life a much greater pictorial quality than anything in Romola. Kingsley had also a capacity for inventing incidents and describing them in a lively and exciting fashion which George Eliot lacked. Consequently Hypatia has more warmth and colour than Romola. Where George Eliot is possibly superior to Kingsley is in her analysis of character. Her psychological insight is particularly acute, especially in analysing emotional reactions, she describes the moral conflicts of her characters in greater detail and with more convincing force than Kingsley.

In George Eliot's earlier works, Adam Bede and The Mill On The Floss, her style in passages of narration, description and dialogue is notably fresh, spontaneous and natural, although it assumes a graver and more laboured air, when the author digresses into reflective comments, or affects a rhetorical manner, as in the conclusion of The Mill On The Floss. But in Romola George Eliot's labour in study and thought is reflected in the style. At the same time her tendency towards reflection and moralising had increased, and owing to these two factors the style is notably

heavier. In the narrative passages it is direct enough and sometimes even vivid, but it lacks the flexibility it possessed earlier, when the writer frequently adapted it to mirror the unspoken thoughts of the characters, thus giving it a conversational naturalness: "Mrs. Pullet was silent, having to finish her crying, and rather flattered than indignant at being upbraided for crying too much. It was not everybody who could afford to cry so much about their neighbours who had left them nothing; but Mrs. Pullet had married a gentleman farmer, and had leisure and money to carry her crying and everything else to the highest pitch of respectability."[1] The heavier texture of the style in Romola becomes evident, if we compare the typical passage with the one cited from The Mill On The Floss: "Under this loggia, in the early morning of the 9th of April 1492, two men had their eyes fixed on each other: one was stooping slightly, and looking downward with the scrutiny of curiosity, the other - lying on the pavement - was looking upward with the startled gaze of a suddenly-awakened dreamer."[2] Even when the thoughts of characters are being analysed there is often little attempt at natural reproduction of inward talk, but a kind of colourless, external treatment, as in Romola's meditations on the changing attitude of Tito: "The breath of sadness that still cleaved to her lot which she saw her father month after month sink from elation into new disappointment as Tito gave him less and less of his time, and made bland excuses for not continuing his own share of the joint work - that sadness was no fault of Tito's, she said, but rather of their inevitable destiny."[3]

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1. The Mill On the Floss (Collins Classics ed.) P.60.
2. Romola, i.15.
3. Ibid., i.372.

Romola distinctly marks a dividing point in George Eliot's career. The buoyant and fresh spirit of the earlier novels is clouded by a naturer wisdom and a pre-occupation with moral and spiritual questions. Henceforth the strain of philosophical reflection and moral teaching assumes chief place and the charm of convincing, humorous and caustic description of English provincial life is largely lost.

The consensus of opinion among critics seems to be that Romola is not in the first rank of historical novels and there is little reason to contest this verdict. It suffers from a natural comparison with George Eliot's earlier novels, but apart from this it has grave defects. Knowledge and research are necessary for the historical novelist, but he has to conceal his labour by transmuting his material with the glow of imaginative apprehension or creation. George Eliot does not succeed in concealing her labour in Romola and the seriousness of her moral purpose increases the oppressive effect of the novel, exposing it to the charge of dullness and pedantry. Some gifts which are practically essential to the historical novelist, such as a dramatic power and brilliance of description are not displayed in Romola in a striking degree, although George Eliot was by no means deficient in these qualities. She shows little of the dramatic power of Scott or Dickens which enables them to present historical events in an illuminating fashion. Neither has she the brilliance of description and the capacity for rapid and exciting narration which Kingsley shows at his best. Thackeray has little dramatic power, but his style is livelier and more readable in its

conversational tone; it has none of the heaviness which besets George Eliot's style in Romola. Her characters, although drawn with great care, have less vitality than those of Scott, Thackeray, Dickens, or Kingsley. On the whole Romola, impressive as it may be on account of the high seriousness of its moral tone, lacks that continuous animation which an historical novel must possess if its picture of life in a bygone period is to carry conviction.

CHAPTER VI

THE HISTORICAL NOVEL OF GEORGE MEREDITH.

VITTORIA[1]

Like George Eliot, George Meredith was the author of only one historical novel, Vittoria, the scene of which, as of Romola, is laid in Italy, although they present very different periods. Vittoria describes a period so close to the time of the novel's composition that some critics have been inclined to classify it as a contemporary novel with political colouring. However, it seems to one that the historical background in Vittoria is definitely important for its own sake, that it is as significant as that of, say, Thackeray's Virginians and that, even after the lapse of only twenty years, Meredith could have seen the events he described in historical perspective. He had to study sources and prepare his material in the same way as the novelist whose period belongs to a more remote date. Vittoria's historical value is attested by Professor G. M. Trevelyan who asserts that it is "partly an historical novel looking back to the past like Waverley or Westward Ho!; partly a work of contemporary fiction that has by process of time become historical, like Chaucer or Miss Austen."[2]

Vittoria is the sequel to, or rather the second part of, Sandra Belloni (1864) which, strictly speaking, stands to its sequel as no more than the first half of a rather long and somewhat turgid tale. Sandra Belloni was originally called Emilia in England, a title which it retained until 1887 and which indeed it might well have retained since it presents the experiences of an Italian exile's daughter. It is in a sense historical also, as it deals with a period more than a quarter of a century before the time of writing,

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1. ~~For its synopsis see Appendix A: XII~~
2. See Prof. Trevelyan's lecture at Cambridge, 1920.

and as the heroine is one whose life has been conditioned by political events. Vittoria, or as it might better have been called, Emilia in Italy, relates the experiences of the same young woman, after her arrival in her father's native land, during 1848 and 1849.

Meredith's two novels present several points of difference. In discussing his insistence on philosophy and ethics in one of those passages in Sandra Belloni, where in the person of "the Philosopher," he occasionally addresses some remarks to the reader, Meredith suggests a distinction in method between that book and its sequel Vittoria. "Let us," he pleads, "be true to time and place. Here in our fat England, the gardener Time is playing all sorts of delicate freaks in the hues and traceries of the flowers of life, and shall we not note them? If we are to understand our species, and mark the progress of civilisation at all, we must."[1] But when Emilia is in Italy, the Philosopher proposes to keep entirely in the background, since in Italy "there is a field of action, of battles, and conspiracies, nerve and muscle, where life fights for plain issues and he can but sum results."[2] In the two novels, therefore, we find a contrast between an England in which nothing violent happens and in which the lives of the characters are comparatively unaffected by external events and a troubled and divided Italy where all the characters are caught up in the movement for national freedom. Society gossip in one is contrasted with political intrigue in the other; affected enthusiasm for art with ardent patriotism. The picture of English society is drawn with malicious, mocking touches, but the grim representation of the Italian scene leaves little place for ridicule, although

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1. Sandra Belloni (Mickleham edition: 1924) P.484
2. Ibid.

Agostino is sometimes a figure of comedy, and keenly satirical touches are evident in the character-sketch of Count Serabiglione,[1] father of Laura Piaveni. Here nearly everything is in deadly earnest and the note of satiric comedy is driven out as a rule by that of a grim tragedy. In short, so far as Sandra Belloni and Vittoria are concerned, it is not the least of the drawbacks of the long history of Emilia that though the first half of it is well-nigh stagnant,[2] and devoted to subtleties of character analysis, yet a reading of it is essential to the proper understanding of the second, which moves to the throb of revolution and burning patriotism.

Meredith wrote Vittoria because he wanted to express the national spirit of modern Italy. The subject was then topical owing to the fresh development of political events in that country. In England the struggle for Italian emancipation was followed with intense interest by such writers as Swinburne and Meredith who were tired of Victorian ease and sentimentality. In its vitalising effect on English writers, like Landor, Meredith, Swinburne, Browning and Mrs. Browning, the Italian awakening made a deeper impression than its effect on statesmen, such as Palmerston and Gladstone. By identifying themselves with the cause of Italian freedom English writers regained a sense of conviction and earnestness which nothing in their immediate surroundings could inspire. This sudden contact with conviction is expressed by Meredith in Sandra Belloni; where the refugee maiden with her patriotic ideals is placed among the Pole family with their petty

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1. "He hated bad men; and it was besides necessary for him to denounce somebody, and get relief of some kind." See Vittoria (Mickleham edition: 1924) P.116.

2. The movement of Sandra Belloni clumsy enough even when left to itself is retarded by the unnecessary disquisitions of "The Philosopher."

social ambitions. Material comfort was not so assured in the country to which Sandra belonged, especially for those patriots who were convinced that man did not live by bread alone. Yet a life of constant struggle with poverty was illuminated by the music of the word "Italia." Some English writers, however, did not realise the significance of the new movement in Italy in their absorption in Italian culture. George Eliot, for instance, was more interested in Italy's history, literature and art than in its contemporary politics.[1] Savonarola was nearer to her and more significant than Mazzini. Rossetti, who was brought up among talk of Italian independence, was tired of it or indifferent to it.

Meredith approached Italy in a different spirit, when he visited it for the first time with his son Arthur, in 1861, for Emilia in England which he had already begun, shows that he was interested in the Italian exiles in London and consequently in the movement for national freedom. At the very threshold of the country he found striking evidence of Austrian domination in the sight of "Adige which the Austrians were fortifying continually. Verona lies under the Alps, and is now less a City than a fortress. You see nothing but white coats - who form the majority of the inhabitants."[2] With his quick perception he was conscious of the brooding nationalist feeling waiting the moment to flare into actual

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1. Writing from Florence to John Blackwood, 18th May,1860, George Eliot says, "Of course, Victor Emmanuel stares at us at every turn here with the most loyal exaggeration of moustache and intelligent meaning. But we are selfishly careless about dynasties just now, caring more for the doings of Giotto and Brunelleschi than for those of Count Cavour." - see Cross's George Eliot's Life, (Blackwood edition; 1885) ii: 229.

2. See Meredith's letter to Mrs. Janet Ross, Nov. 19: 1861 in Letters of Meredith collected by his son 1844-1881. (Second edition, London 1912) vol. i. P. 46.

insurrection. This lurking menace is referred to in his letters. A Venetian woman, who smiles on a White-coat, he writes, has the prospect of a patriotic dagger smiting her fair bosom.[1] This ostracism of Austrian soldiers by the Italian women is described at some length in Vittoria.[2]

Meredith again visited Italy in 1863, when he was in the midst of his preparations for the projected novel of Emilia in Italy, reading steadily to gain material for the battle scenes. He crossed Mount Genevre into Piedmont with his friend Lionel Robinson and walked over most of the region described with Turneresque brilliance in the opening passage of Vittoria.

According to Meredith's letters, the early portion of Vittoria was written during the happy frame of mind induced by his engagement and second marriage. He wrote to Maxse in the summer of 1864: "Vittoria does not proceed fast, but the matter is of a good sort. I've half a mind to bring you half-a-dozen chapters to read to you. My Marie copies them regularly."[3] And to Hardman: "The New Novel (Vittoria) is going on swimmingly. Sandys had heard the first 150 pages, and says it is extremely interesting, and likely to be by far the best thing I have done."[4]

Through the autumn and winter of 1864 Meredith's interest in what was then taking place in Italy was manifestly growing. But he had allowed his novels to overlap a good deal during this period,

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1. See Meredith's letter to Mrs. Janet Ross, Nov. 19: 1861 in Letters of Meredith collected by his son 1844-1881. (Second edition, London 1912) vol. i. P. 49.
2. See Vittoria Chap. IX.
3. Letters of George Meredith i. 141.
4. Ibid P. 53.

and he was then engaged in finishing Rhoda Fleming (which had been begun four years earlier), and at the same time he was wrestling with Vittoria. Once the English story was off his hands, he was free to return to the Italian novel. In the later autumn of 1865, he wrote to Maxse: "I am very hot upon Vittoria.[1] Lewes says it must be a success; and it has my best writing ... Perhaps I have given it too historical a character to please the brooding mind of Fred. But we shall see. I think one must almost love Italy to care for it and the heroine. There are scenes that will hold you; much adventure to entertain you; delicate bits and fiery handling. But there is no tender dissection, and the softer emotions are not kept at half-gasp among slowly moving telescopic objects, with their hearts seen beating in their frames."[2] This is all in contrast to his usual type of novel.

In February, 1866, Vittoria[3] made its first appearance as a serial in the Fortnightly Review. And in May, Meredith undertook the most important commission in journalism he ever discharged, going out to the Austro-Italian War, as correspondent for the Morning Post. He hated the methods of journalism, which were in absolute antithesis to his own natural style. His reports of the war were mainly second hand, as he did not see much of the actual fighting. But he accompanied the Italian Army, driving and camping with the troops. Here he was more in his element, and his narratives, written in haste without time for elaboration,

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1. G. ~~A.~~ H. Lewes then the editor of the Fortnightly Review.

2. Meredith's Letters i. 156

3. To its editor Meredith wrote: "I shall be glad to make over to you the use of the Copyright of my novel Vittoria for issue in the Fortnightly Review in consideration of the sum of £250: all subsequent rights to the use of it being reserved to myself." - Meredith's Letters i. 175.

and therefore quite un-Meredithian, are not without some interest and value.[1] Except for a three weeks' visit to England at the end of July, he was in Italy throughout that autumn and into the winter. It has been stated in biographical sketches that it was during this enterprise that Meredith secured more material for Vittoria; a difficult feat, ~~no doubt,~~ however, for the story was already begun in the Fortnightly Review, unless he wrote the rest of the novel from month to month, in Venice or elsewhere. "If my progress seems to you slow," he wrote to the editor of Fortnightly Review, "remember that I am on foreign ground and have to walk wearily. I read a good deal to Mdme Venturi[2] the other day who says that the Italian colouring is correct."[3] Thus we see this expedition did enable him to obtain some additional and valuable local colour for Vittoria, before it was published in three volumes at the beginning of 1867.

For some curious reason, as events in Italy had aroused considerable excitement in England, Vittoria was not warmly received by the majority of critics and readers. It was not reprinted for nineteen years, and both publishers and author were compelled to consider it a commercial failure. Meredith was keenly sensitive to what he considered the dense misapprehension of his contemporaries and he wrote (to a correspondent who desired a copy of this book) how "the effect of public disfavour has been to make me indifferent to my works after they have gone through their course of castigation, and I have copies of only a few." Vittoria happens

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3. See Meredith's Correspondence from the Seat of War in Italy (1866) reprinted in Memorial Edition, Vol. xxiii and edition-de-luxe of his works.

2. A great friend of Mazzini.

3. Meredith's Letters i. 176.

to be of the number, but my children are now getting old enough to claim what can be preserved of them; otherwise I would send it. I will, when I am next in town, see whether a copy remains with the publisher."[1]

Vittoria did, however, receive the immediate appreciation of at least one great contemporary and friend, Swinburne, to whom the disappointed author pours out the aims he had had in this novel. "My object," Meredith says, "was not to write the epic of the Revolt - for that the time is yet too new; but to represent the revolt itself, with the passions animating both sides, the revival of the fervid Italian blood; and the character of the people.... I am afraid it must be true that the style is stiff; but a less condensed would not have compassed the great amount of matter."[2] It was a mistake, however, to cover so much ground and to select so little.

Besides the material he gained for Vittoria from his visits to Italy, Meredith must have read all the accounts available of the career of Mazzini, the five-days revolution in Milan, the risings elsewhere and the campaigns of Charles Albert. Several histories of Italy during this period which dealt at some length with the Revolution of 1848-49, mostly in Italian, had been published before Meredith began to write Vittoria. They were L.C. Farrini's Storia d'Italia del 1814 sino ai nostri giorni (1854-9) and F. Ranalli's Le Istorie Italiane del 1846 al 1853 (1855). There were also works specifically concerned with the events of the two revolutionary years in which the action of Vittoria takes place, such as F.A. Gualterio's Gli Ultimi Rivolgimenti Italiani Memorie storiche con documenti

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1. Op. Cit. S.M. Ellis: George Meredith P. 225
2. See Meredith's letter to Swinburne on the second of March, 1867 in Letters i. 189

inediti (1850) and C. Cathanes's L'Insurreziorie di Milans (1849). The Princess Belgiojoso, who was probably the original of Laura Piaveni, wrote a book entitled L'Austria e la rivoluzione italiana in 1847, and though it was written too early to provide Meredith with historical details it would be invaluable for suggesting the patriotic sentiments of the Italians and their attitude towards the Austrians. The Life and Writings of Ginseppe Mazzini (1864-70) was just beginning to appear when Meredith began to write, but it is certain that he would consult the early volumes for details about the appearance, personality and achievements of the Italian patriot. For Charles Albert and his campaigns Meredith no doubt read L. Cibrario's Notizia Sulla Vita di Carlo Alberto (1861) and Ferdinando Pinelli's Storia Militare de Piemonte (1855).

One point that differentiates Vittoria[1] from the other historical novels of the century is the extent to which national sentiment forms a motif for the action. Certainly a robust patriotism animates Westward Ho! and Hereward the Wake, but it is of a rather different type from the kind of sentiment that dominates Vittoria. Westward Ho! shows that spirit of patriotic pride an Englishman like Kingsley was bound to feel when he contemplated the achievements of his forebears in resisting the Spanish enemy. Its patriotism is mingled besides with religious prejudice. Hereward the Wake is also shown as a patriot fighting to the last against the invading Normans, but this local resistance is a different matter from a national rising against the oppression such as we find in Vittoria. Moreover, the patriotism which Kingsley represents is that which time has robbed of its actuality and which is somewhat idealised in retrospect. Meredith describes patriotic action on a larger scale and represents a movement, which, to him, had all the immediacy and actuality of contemporary events. National sentiment has not in Vittoria a subordinate place; it is the mainspring of

1. For its sources see Appendix B: V P. 409.

of the whole novel. Among the historical novels we have discussed, Vittoria is unique also in that the patriotism which takes hold of the writer's mind is that demonstrated by the people of another country. Nowhere before Meredith can we find an instance of an historical novelist stirred to enthusiasm by the ideal of national liberty. Probably the reason is that the ideals of national emancipation and national self-determination emerged with greater force as a literary motif about the middle of the nineteenth century than it had been about the time of the French Revolution, when more universal ideals of humanity were cherished. Certainly national feeling and the concept of nationality were by no means new, but they assumed the form of compelling ideals in the nineteenth century and led to the emancipation of Italy and the unification of Germany. Hence the interest in Vittoria is not so much in characters living in a particular society, wearing its costumes, taking part in its events and mingling with historical personages, as is the case in the novels of Scott or showing by their reactions the effects of philosophical and religious systems as in the historical novels of George Eliot and Pater, but in characters as they illustrate according to their lights, the force of a patriotic zeal for freedom. The characters are important chiefly as instruments of a case greater than themselves. Perhaps, the historical novel which is closest to Vittoria in comparative proximity in the events described is a Tale of Two Cities, although the superficial differences obscure this resemblance. In Vittoria Meredith tries to express the atmosphere of the Italian revolution of 1848, without tracing all its details, though he describes more historical incidents than Dickens does. But after all these are not so important in Vittoria as the various effects on the characters, most of whom typify the various emotions and motives inspiring the rising. Their symbolical significance in most cases outweighs

their individual importance.

Vittoria, like A Tale of Two Cities, deals with a love story, which has an element of tragedy set against a background of revolution, although in it the political events assume again major importance; in A Tale of Two Cities a better balance is observed. But in both works the raison d'être is the same, namely a desire to show by illuminating incidents the progress of a revolution and the passions animating the revolutionaries. Yet in spite of these resemblances it would be rash to suggest that A Tale of Two Cities was Meredith's model for Vittoria, since Meredith had not much regard for Dickens and differences in method and style are obvious enough.

The Italian struggle for emancipation which thrilled Meredith so much passed through two phases; the first of inspiration and failure which ended with the defeat of the Piedmontese army in 1849 at Novara and the abdication of Charles Albert; the second of victory with the battles of Magenta and Solferino in 1859 which cleared the way for the establishment of Victor Emmanuel in Rome, in 1870-1871. Meredith preferred to represent the first phase, the time of unsuccessful aspiration rather than that of success. Probably the period of failure which places a greater stress on the minds of the characters, and calls forth nobler qualities than success seemed to him more rich in possibilities for fiction. In Vittoria ~~he~~ Meredith reproduces the cross-currents of an abortive insurrection; the conflicting hopes and fears of a still divided people; patriotic ideals contending with apathy and habits of servitude;[1] jealousy and suspicions among the patriots themselves; and quarrels between advocates of a monarchy and a republic. And the movement weakened by all these internal conflicts was directed against

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1. This has been eloquently described by Mrs Browning in Casa Guidi Windows. (1851).

the power of Austria. "What bloom of hope was there for the mothers of Italy, when Austria stood like an iron wall, and their own ones dashing against it were as little feeble waves that left a red mark and no more?"[1] Yet Vittoria expresses the conviction that even in the face of formidable oppression a nation will survive, if the spirit of its patriotism is indomitable.

One disadvantage the modern reader feels about the historical background of Vittoria is the difficulty of comprehending it as a whole. Meredith writing at a time when the events of the Italian revolt of 1848 was still fresh in the minds of Englishmen seems to have taken knowledge of it for granted. There is no clear exposition of the causes and progress of the struggle, such as Scott gives either in his introductions or in the course of the narrative, or George Eliot in the Proem or the beginning of Part 11 of Romola, or Kingsley in the introduction to Hereward the Wake. One is impressed very strongly by the ardent emotions aroused by the Italian aspirations towards national liberty and the arrogance and lack of understanding of the Austrians are indicated. There is also a series of vivid, if somewhat incoherent descriptions of street fighting and local risings. But one cannot see the wood for the trees. There is no attempt to give a panoramic view of the whole rising, which might have been done by concentrating on the chief personages and the principal events, instead of passing from one local incident to another, apparently all of the same significance. Mazzini is introduced in a rather spectacular fashion in the first chapter, but he plays little part in subsequent events. Meredith seems to have been unable to see the rising in perspective, for it appears as little more than a series of episodes.

But, Vittoria as an historical novel, has its own merits. It is bolder in conception and wider in scope than most historical

1. Fortnightly Review Feb, 1919. P. 299.

novels contemporary with it. Besides it reveals insight into the motives that inspire political actions, and an ardent sympathy combined with a judicial temper that enables the writer to depict with verisimititude characters on both sides of the contest. Moreover, Vittoria is impartial in its treatment of the Austrians and the Italians. Meredith's critics have praised ~~his~~ the artistic restraint which prevented him from allowing his enthusiasm for Italian liberty full sway. "He who tells this tale is not a partisan; he would deal equally towards all. Of strong devotion, of stout nobility, of unswerving faith and self sacrifice, he must approve; and when these qualities are displayed in a contest of forces, the wisdom of means employed, or of ultimate views entertained, may be questioned and condemned; but the men themselves may not be."[1] In Vittoria the Austrians are dealt with justly. Their point of view is fully represented, and their good qualities - their courage, their gallantry, their strength of purpose, their discipline and organising power - are adequately emphasised. Our sympathy is won by a Colonel Weisspreiss no less than by an Angelo Guidascarpi. And there is no false glamour thrown over the struggle and aspirations of Italy. A powerful impression is made by so dispassionate and so impersonal a record.[2]

The novel of Vittoria contains a series of vivid military scenes, plots, and intrigues. And there is an onrush in the several chapters presenting the events immediately preceding the abortive uprising, and in those relating the flight of the heroine, which

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1. Vittoria P. 12.
2. The history of the campaign of 1848 is " on the Italian side - a lamentable record of disunion; incompetency, and bad generalship; on the Austrian, an example of the solidity and recuperative power of a well-trained military machine." See Janet Penrose Trevelyan's A Short History of the Italian People (3rd Ed. 1927) P. 487.

might carry readers to the end. But, on the whole, the book is impeded by its overabundance of matter. It is not the rapidly moving tale the author contemplated writing when Emilia should return to Italy. The personality of Vittoria is the chief factor that gives unity to the chapters, but she is not always on the stage. Moreover, the accumulation of episodes and the multitude of characters, of whom there are one hundred and nine, crowd the pages to such an extent that a good deal of mental effort is required to make one's way through the confusion.

Meredith delays the action by sketching at some length the traits of numerous characters, whether they take an important part in the story or not, as, for instance, the Count Serabiglione. Instead of carrying on the action from chapter to chapter, Meredith often pauses at the beginning of a chapter to introduce a new character and to describe his or her experiences with the Austrians. It seems to have been his purpose to express the sentiments of the Italians and to portray the different types of characters who took part in the rising, rather than to give a consecutive and comprehensive account of events that were still too near to be seen in perspective. But this crowding of the stage does not make for good structure and slows down the tempo of the story.

Meredith's handling of situation has also an adverse effect on the structure. Sometimes, as in his description of the Cinque Giornate in Milan, one situation follows another so quickly, the reader's attention is diverted from one group of characters to another so rapidly that the effect is bewildering, and he shows a tendency to introduce unnecessary situations, such as Vittoria's conversation at the Castle of Sonnenberg with the priest who mistakenly assumes that she desires to confess.[1] Occasionally situations are elaborated beyond their due proportions, especially in the scene at the opera-house in Milan, where Camilla is performed. On this occasion Vittoria sings her famous song, but

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1. See Vittoria, chap. XXVII.

the preparations for this climax are unduly protracted, and as the practical results of her song are not obvious it seems that whatever the dramatic impressiveness of this situation it has little effect on the action. Admittedly it is a landmark in Vittoria's career, and justifiable if the main point of the novel is to illustrate the character of Vittoria. One is never quite certain whether Vittoria or the national revolt against the Austrians should attract most attention. The lengthy description of Vittoria's flight after the performance of the opera certainly adds little to the historical interest, and unless the portrayal of Vittoria be regarded as the main purpose of the novel, the incidents connected with Pericles, the Greek admirer of her vocal powers are superfluous, and in any case they are incongruous and absurd.

Meredith was never a good architect in novel structure, and his tendency to elaborate incidents at the expense of the whole narrative diminishes the value of Vittoria as an historical novel. That is why, for instance, instead of a comprehensive picture of the whole insurrection in Milan and Lombardy we have a succession of detached episodes, most of them good in themselves, but standing in the way of a panoramic view of the whole revolt, such as Scott or Dumas might have given. George Eliot's Romola, for instance, is a better constructed work than Vittoria and presents a wider survey of the contemporary historical scene. For this reason it seems to one superior to Vittoria, judged purely as an historical novel.

It is certain that Meredith had several stories, instead of one, to tell, and that his desire to include an abundance of matter led him to tell them all together. He seems to have lacked the capacity for selection and the exclusion and the connecting power necessary for the writer of a novel of incident. Meredith was not a story-teller either by nature or by training. Wilde shrewdly remarked that "as a novelist he can do everything, except tell a story"[1]. This lack of the story-teller's gift - especially lack of connecting power - is undoubtedly a serious defect. Life appeared to Meredith too complicated and inconsequent for events to stand to one another in a strict order of causal sequence; so that the plot is bound to be ill-constructed, or rather not constructed at all. "Vittoria, avowedly a novel of incident", writes J.B. Priestley, "shows no large line of construction at all, and we have to make the most of individual scenes without knowing quite how we have arrived at them or where they will lead us."[2]

The criticisms which have been made of the plot of Vittoria apply more or less to all Meredith's works, but defects in structure matter less in his non-historical novels, where events are not so important. Not that a compact and neatly designed plot is essential in the historical novel. Thackeray shows that looseness of structure does not impair its value. But Thackeray

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1. Op. cit., George Meredith by J.B. Priestley (English Men of Letters series) p. 144.

2. Ibid., p. 146.

was more interested in manners and customs than in revolutionary intrigues and fighting. A clear indication of causes and effects was not so necessary for his stories as one would expect in a novel with a subject such as Vittoria's. Yet Thackeray's methods of handling historical material are more direct and clear than those of Meredith. His description of the Battle of Blenheim, for instance, is less vague than Meredith's description of Charles Albert's engagement with the Austrains at Pastrengo.[1]. Though it may seem pedantic to insist overmuch on points of structure it does appear that the historical novelist who deals largely with externals, that is with events and incidents, their cause and consequences, neglects details of structure at his peril.

The merit of Vittoria does not lie in the story but in its intense dramatisation of some incidents. Indeed it is the incidents and not the characters, except the heroine and "the Chief" that stand out most prominently. The narrative may pursue a tortuous course but the quick movement and illuminating vividness of certain scenes stamp them indelibly on the memory. The scene at the La Scala on the eve of the revolt, the subsequent flight of Vittoria and her night wanderings with Angelo on the hills of the Austrian border, the duel in the Stelvio Pass, Wilfrid's escape from the dungeon-house of Barto-Rizzo, the rising at Milan, the vengeance of the Guidascarpi on the

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1. See Vittoria, chap. XXXII.

betrayer of their sister and Carlo's death - these and other such graphic episodes are in the best manner of historical romance.

But apart from Mazzini, Vittoria, Barto Rizzo, Carlo and Laura Piaveni, the characters are not deeply etched: rather are they suggestive types of their respective nations or provinces or functions.

Mazzini is introduced at the beginning in a dramatic fashion, a silhouette on the sky-line, awaiting his followers on Monte Motterone[1]. His inspiring force, his inconsistencies, and his weaknesses are all revealed in Meredith's subtle and minute study of his character. In spite of his prejudices, and idealistic disregard of facts, his practical failings, and tactical blunders, such as his overtures to Carlo Alberto, his quarrel with Garibaldi, his dislike of Victor Emmanuel, and his blindness to the talents of Cavour, Mazzini may justly be regarded as the creator of modern Italy for he reawakened her national consciousness. Yet it is surprising that Meredith did not include in Vittoria that striking episode of the Revolution of 1848 - 49, in which Mazzini was the central figure,

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1. At first sight frail and student-like, not a force, "until the observer became aware that those soft and large dark meditative eyes had taken hold of him. In them lay no abstracted student's languor, no reflex burning of a solitary lamp; but a quiet grappling force engaged the penetrating look" - (Vittoria pp. 7-8) Professor G.M. Trevelyan in one of his lectures at Cambridge, 1920, says "Vittoria contains the finest and truest picture of Mazzini that has ever been drawn."

namely, the short-lived Republic in Rome. Moreover, its inclusion might have meant that Mazzini would have dominated the stage too much, whereas as it is he remains in the background, a rather mysterious figure, inspiring the movement of others. Mazzini's part in Vittoria directing movement from behind the scenes reminds one of Lord George Gordon's actions in Barnaby Rudge, although the two men are very different in personality, talents and character.

Mazzini is a character of something the same type as Savonarola, although they differ in many respects. Both are inspired by noble and disinterested ideals which give singular force to their personalities, impress those who come in contact with them and attract a band of devoted followers to them. They radiate dynamic power, which equips them for leadership, but at the same time they are too egoistic, too much convinced of the absolute rightness of their principles and judgments. Consequently there is an abnormal, theatrical, flamboyant streak in their temperaments. However, Savonarola is studied more elaborately in Romola, than Mazzini is in Vittoria. Meredith draws an impressive figure, who seldom reappears, but the entrance of Savonarola is delayed in Romola until the action is well in progress. Therefore he plays a part of increasing importance, until towards the end he monopolises the reader's attention.

Hot-headed republicans, hating compromise and the court at Turin almost as much as they hated Austria, are represented by the young conspirator Count Carlo Ammiani, whose ardent patriotism, unflinching courage, and keen sense of personal honour make him

worthy of the love of Vittoria. His obstinate persistence and refusal to listen to the advice of his wife, which bring about his tragic death do not lessen one's esteem for his noble character. An equally sincere patriotism allied with more prudence and reflection is shown by Agostino, who is also the vehicle of that half-humorous satire which is generally an ingredient in the novels of Meredith. As Carlo is the type of the young and ardent nationalist, Agostino typifies the elderly patriot whose zeal has not yet been diminished by age or broken by suffering.

Other types are no less striking. Luigi, the spy, is an excellent sketch of a simple Italian, with a turn for roguery, who i yet capable of honesty when his heart is touched. Beppo, the faithf servant strongly reminds one of Martin Lightfoot in Hereward the Wak But one of the best and the most individual portrait in this tragedy is the powerful, restless, mysterious Italian conspirator Barto Rizz "the Eye of Italy, - the cat who sees in the dark".[2] "He can run a day; he can fast a week; he can climb a house; he can drop from a crag, and he never lets go his hold. If he says a thing to his wife, she goes true as a bullet to the mark. The two make a complete piece of artillery. We are all for Barto, though our Captain Carlo is often enraged with him. But there is no getting on without him. We have found that".[3] Barto represents a type which appears in every revolution - the sincere and egoistic conspirator, whose

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1. After Carlo had been shot and his corpse rolled "down the precipitous wave of green grass or to the Crag, where... the body caught midway hung poised and motionless." it was Beppo who "flung himself astride to the beak of the crag and took the body in his arms?" (See Vittoria p.626) Does this not suggest Martin Lightfoot who took down Hereward's head from the gate at Bourne and held it on his knees? (Hereward the Wake, Vol. ii p. 340).
2. Vittoria p. 376.
3. Ibid.

absorption in intrigue dims his perception of the wider issues at stake. He is one of those narrow-minded and merciless revolutionaries, like Danton and Robespierre. Able as he is, he is extremely obstinate, and will sacrifice a cause to his own prejudices; he is relentless to the treacherous, yet honest and energetic, if untractable and perverse, and on the whole doing more mischief than good. This figure is worthy of Balzac; but, unhappily, it is not fully developed. Barto Rizzo's wife is a pathetic character. She typifies the eternal tragedy in human life that springs from a maladjustment of personality to environment. She cannot arrive at self-knowledge and self-command, but gropes blindly for as much understanding as her simple personality and intense emotions will allow her. Consequently she is no more than the servile instrument of her sinister husband.

The brothers Guidascarpi are cast in a tragic mould. Though men of distinguished rank and of intelligence, they are shrouded by the dark story of their sister's death, and their revenge. When Rinaldo was imprisoned in The Dungeon-house of Barto-Rizzo, he entertained Wilfrid (also imprisoned there) with very strange talk. He spoke of the stars and of a destiny. He cited certain minor events of his life to show the ground of his present belief in there being a written destiny for each individual man. "Anglo and I know it well. It was revealed to us when we were boys. It has been certified to us up to this moment. ... My days end with this new year. His end with the year following. Our house is dead. ... We have neither mother nor sister, nor betrothed. What is an existence that can fly to no human arms?"[1] The brother Guidascarpi are among the most tragically conceived of Meredith's characters. That is to say there is something

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1. Vittoria p. 377.

inherently tragic in their very dispositions, apart from the external forces that are at work to ruin them; they seem branded with the mark of fate.

Another tragic figure is Laura Piaveni[1], the dominant motive of whose life was a fiery patriotism maintained at white heat by the ever-present memory of her husband's death[2] - murder, it was to her. "The spirit of her dead husband had come to her from the grave, and warmed a frame previously indifferent to anything save his personal merits"[3]. Her patriotism is derived from personal suffering and is not so disinterested as that of Vittoria. She came to identify herself with the patriotic cause owing to her abhorrence of the Austrian rule, which had been responsible for her husband's death, and not so much owing to innate love of Italy. Laura Piaveni represents one type of patriot, the one who is embittered by suffering and oppression, in whom hatred and desire for vengeance take the place of a more positive emotion.

In contrast with Laura Piaveni stands Countess Violetta, whose characteristics are "a leaning towards evil, a light sense of shame, a desire for money, and in her heart a contempt for the principles she did not possess, but which, apart from

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1. G.M. Trevelyan in his "Garibaldi's Defence of the Rome Republic (1987) incidentally points out that Laura Piaveni reproduces some traits of the character of Princess Belgiojoso, a high-minded and devoted aristocratic adherent of the revolution.
2. Her husband, Giacomo Piaveni was an Italian Patriot who was betrayed to the Austrians and shot on Annunciation Day.
3. Vittoria p. 118.

the intervention of other influences could occasionally sway her actions".[1] She strongly suggests Becky Sharp, because both use their beauty for their own interests. But as an adventuress, Violetta is successful and unlike poor Becky, lives and dies, we imagine, a fine lady, driven by ambition to duplicities, but not consciously mean or dishonest. Meredith shows that a cynical, intriguing woman, full of vulgar pride and not illegitimate ambition, may be interesting, and not unloved by her creator.

Another figure who is the only comic character in the whole drama is the admirer of Vittoria's voice, the cosmopolitan, and devotee of art, the Greek musical connoisseur, Antonio Pericles. To him a great cantatrice is a person of world importance, whereas a revolution is but a parochial disturbance. His passion for music has its humorous side, but there is something noble in his devotion to the art; it seems deeper than that of Vittoria herself. Vittoria is patriot, singer, and woman by turns; Pericles lives for music, or rather for the spiritual endowment of Vittoria's voice. The music lovers in One of Our Conquerors (1891) are poor things compared to this superb, unselfish merchant, who is indignant because others will not see the duty of putting music before patriotism and love.

But the most elaborate portrait is that of Vittoria herself, whose personality supplies what thread of unity there is in the novel, from the opening scene when she meets the Chief on the

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1. Vittoria, p. 506.

Monte Metterone to the sad ending in her separation from her husband in the body though happily not in affection. She is obviously one of Meredith's greatest characters, on whom he lavished infinite pains. For she is the subject of two of his longest novels. In Sandra Belloni she is always beautiful and attractive; in Vittoria she is stately and commanding. She sways Mazzini to belief in her; she catches the heart of the conspirators; she impresses, even when she offends, the Italian aristocrats with her combination of charm and resolution. She puts her gift at the service of the country. And for the sake of Italy, she destroyed the career of her two English devotees, Wilfrid and Merthyr[1]. Her supreme contribution to the struggle is the passionate idealism of her faith in Italy. Whereas Carlo shared Mazzini's and his followers' suspicions of Charles Albert, which together with the King's military irresolution, helped to wreck the revolution, Vittoria not only believed[2] in the King, but insisted on praising him, and even followed his army to help in the liberation of Italy. This fills her lover with insufferable anguish. Thus the schism between monarchists and republicans which hurts the

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1. Wilfrid and Merthyr are leading personages in Sandra Belloni but accessories to Vittoria.

2. Meredith'analyses Vittoria's view of the king into a sympathetic pity for one whom she thought misjudged. She prided herself on thinking "That she divined the king's character by mystical intuition" (Vittoria P.334)

patriotic cause hurts the lovers, too. Consequently, when she married Carlo, she sacrificed herself; because they were never wholly in unison, and he did not trust her even in conspiracies for Italian freedom. Because he did not trust her, he lost his life in a futile revolt, and she was left to mourn him inconsolably. The picture which Meredith gives of her at the very close of Vittoria shows that strength of mind, greatness of heart and nobility of soul were hers. In her whole-hearted and passionate devotion to the cause Vittoria is greater than the average heroine; she is the very symbol of Italian freedom. Meredith was true to the actual teaching of Mazzini when he represents him as saying, "Let no strong man among us despise the help of women"[1], and indeed women played their part in the history of the revolt, but the self-sacrifice of the women of Italy is concentrated in Vittoria, who has the soul of an Italian Joan of Arc.

As for Meredith's style, it is not an ideal medium for a novel embodying historical narrative. It sometimes gives us the impression of prose striving to be poetry, though his sentences are genuine attempts to express something forcibly, and seem natural to him; but they imply an effort to put more into a normal prose narrative style than it can contain, with the natural result that it is hard to read. A similar defect may be traced even in Meredith's dialogues. They are often

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1. Vittoria p. 22.

smart sayings full of epigram and hidden allusion and indirect satire so that in reading Meredith we often have that unpleasant feeling which is sometimes produced by the talk of a very clever man who wants to be a little cleverer still. This excessive use of artificial illumination, while compelling admiration for the writer's extraordinary cleverness, wearies and irritates at times, and makes one long for the mental repose of some pages of straightforward prose. Meredith ranks with George Eliot as a serious intellectual worker, but he had not her good fortune to start with a simple and facile style, within reach of the average reader. Those who do not want to be compelled to think can easily follow George Eliot's story, even when they ignore the profound ideas which it conveys. In brief, the qualities that make the story-teller pure and simple, that create the substance of most fiction, are the hardest to find in all Meredith's works.

Whether Meredith's single incursion into the realm of historical fiction can be regarded as a great success is doubtful. Certainly modern critics in their considerations of his work are apt to neglect Vittoria. It has not much relevance to Meredith's characteristic philosophy, nor to his characteristic attacks on sentimentality and affectation. His stylistic qualities, his airs and graces, his studious avoidance of the sober reality that distinguishes, for instance, the work of Trollope, may be studied with greater advantage in better known novels, like The Egoist (1879). If Vittoria cannot be assigned

a high place among Meredith's own novels, it cannot be ranked very high either among the major historical novels ~~and~~ for an inability, or rather unwillingness, to write straightforward prose for any length of time are heavy handicaps for the historical novelist. Fortunately those defects which are apt to leave an historical novel in a state of suspended animation are counterbalanced by Meredith's grasp of political passions stirred up by the Italian movement for liberation. Indeed, at the time of writing, this movement was still a living issue and Meredith had to make no great effort of the imagination to recapture the sentiments and ideas of the people of his period, as kingsley and George Eliot had to do. But he could not recreate the past with the dramatic power of Scott and Dickens. Those episodes and scenes in Vittoria which stand out in the memory, and which constitute its greatest merit, are isolated and hardly give impetus to the rest of the narrative. That is to say, Vittoria like most of his other works is marked by that intermittent brilliancy which is Meredith's characteristic excellence and which carry ies the reader over the comparatively dull stretches that lie between.

CHAPTER VII.

The Historical Novels of Walter Pater.
Marius the Epicurean and Gaston de Latour.

I

Pater was a scholarly essayist and critic rather than a novelist, and ~~different~~ motives different from those of previous novelists must have animated him in writing Marius the Epicurean and Gaston de Latour. He was not interested so much in the manners of past periods as Scott and Thackeray were; neither had he any reforming purpose, such as Dickens shows in Barnaby Rudge. He was not writing to gratify prejudices or to draw ammunition from the past in his contest with religious opponents, as Kingsley did; nor was his imagination awakened by patriotic struggles as that of Meredith was in Vittoria.

His attitude to the past approaches more nearly to the attitude of George Eliot than to that of the other novelists, al: :though here again important differences are discernible. Both are interested in philosophy, but George Eliot is concerned with philosophy in its universal application, in its effect on society. Pater is more interested in its psychological bearings, in its effect on individual souls. He was particularly fascinated by crucial periods in history, when conflicts of the utmost importance for the souls of men were fought between rival philosophies, as between paganism and Christianity in the second century and between authority and scepticism or free inquiry in the sixteenth. No doubt Pater wrote historical novels to realise more clearly the spiritual and intellectual experiences of individuals living amidst the cross-currents of such critical ages. His scholarship pro:

~~1. For their synopses see Appendix A.: XIII and XIV.~~

:vided him with the material and his sense of art led him to dress it up in the form of fiction, although his lack of training as a novelist and the limitations of his creative power prevented him from achieving a high degree of success qua novelist. It was natural also for a scholar like Pater interested in the thought and literature of past periods to prefer the historical novel to those dealing with contemporary society.

II

Exactly when Pater began to form the design of Marius the Epicurean we do not know. But the table of his life and work shows that, with the slight exception of the essay on Rossetti, written in 1883, the years from 1881 to 1885 were given up chiefly to its composition. In 1882, Pater wrote: "I have made some pro: :gress with my Marius, the setting of which is to be ancient Rome in the time of Marcus Aurelius. Similar studies - suggested by the changes of a soul - have occupied the minds of scholars in all ages; but mine will, I think, have a savour - a bouquet of its own. It now only remains for me to go to Rome, as I shall, at the end of the year, in order to vivify the sentiments to which you (Jackson) have given expression and to obtain local colour." [1]

Marius the Epicurean was published in 1885, and was received, though not without some polite scruples as to ~~it's~~ its too curious considerings, with the deference due to a sustained work by a writer of eminence.

Dowden believed that Pater would be known to posterity chiefly by Marius the Epicurean; "the success of Marius", he says, was as great as that of a book so grave and strenuous could be." [2]

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1. To his intimate friend, Richard C. Jackson, who was almost daily in Pater's company for seventeen years. See Thomas Wright's Life of Walter Pater P. 59.
2. The Contemporary Review Dec. 1885. P. 804.

Lucian. The Augustan Histories furnished a convenient store of historical detail. Dio Cassius supplied "the ceremony of the Dart," and Eusebius the letter from the christian martyrs. The service near the house of St. Cecilia was built up from the Shepherd of Hermas, who wrote the Pilgrim's Progress of that day. And the youth Flavian is probably an imaginary portrait of the author of the haunting Per vigilium Veneris, which is now commonly ascribed to a later date.

In Marius the Epicurean[1] Pater passed from his essays, which were sometimes a kind of historical fiction in brief to an historical novel proper in order to set forth the mental adventures of "the sensations and ideas" of an imaginary Roman youth in the second century. His aim was chiefly to justify and modify the epicureanism, or "New Cyrenaicism" he had advocated in The Renaissance (1873). In the concluding passage of that work he had boldly stated his belief in a kind of hedonism which seized on every psychological and intellectual experience and tried to enjoy them at their highest pitch. To enrich one's consciousness by the frequency and the intensity of those experiences was the endeavour of the man of culture. But alarm lest this teaching should mislead young men induced Pater to omit the concluding passage in the next edition,[2] and in Marius he presents a more spiritualised version of epicureanism. It is Pater's

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1. For its sources see Appendix B: VI. P. 410.

2. See the footnote to the conclusion in third edition. "This brief conclusion was omitted in the second edition of this book, as I conceive it might possibly mislead some of those young men into whose hands it might fall. On the whole I have thought best to bring it here, with some slight changes which bring it closer to my original meaning. I have dealt more fully in Marius the Epicurean with the thoughts suggested by it." Renaissance, Macmillan edition 1913. P. 233.

statement of Epicureanism, corrected, explained, expanded, put more temperately and raised to a higher power. Young Marius starts with the philosophy of the conclusion of the Renaissance. He, too, is profoundly aware of the external flux and has no illusions about the blind hopes of human knowledge. He, too, is avid for life, for life as the end of life. But his is a spiritual imagination which seeks not pleasure but fullness of life, which finds a sense of happiness in conforming to the highest moral ideal that it can clearly define for itself. There is always, however, an ascetic note about the epicureanism of Pater, which distinguishes it from the sensuous luxuriousness of the devotees of "art for art's sake". " A true epicureanism", he says, - that is, 'life as a fine art,' - "aims at a complete thorough harmonious development of man's entire organism. To lose the moral sense, therefore, for instance, the sense of sin and righteousness ....is to pass from a higher to a lower degree of development."[1] The seriousness of his purpose in Marius is indicated by the following passage from a letter: "I regard this present matter,"he wrote "as a sort of duty. For there is a sort of religious phase possible for the modern mind, the conditions of which phase it is the main object of my design to convey.[x] "[2] Again he wrote: "To my mind, the beliefs and the

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1. See uncollected Essays, PP. 127-130. Cf. "What Epicureanism taught was the unity and harmony of human nature; And its aim was to make life complete in itself and independent of all external powers." W. Wallace: Epicureanism (1880) P. 270.

x Italics mine.

2. Benson: Walter Pater (English Men of Letters) P. 90.

function in the world, of the historic Church, form just one of those obscure but all important possibilities, which the human mind is powerless effectively to dismiss from itself; and might wisely accept, in the first place, as a workable hypothesis."[1.]

In fact, Pater has definitely informed us that his object in writing Marius was"to show the necessity of religion;"[2.] and he chose the time of Marcus Aurelius for his story because it seemed to him, that age and his own had much in common - many difficulties and hopes. Thus Marius which may be considered a philosophical novel, may also be described as religious historical fiction. In: :deed throughout the book Pater clings closely to that line where religion and art merge in concrete, sensuous form. Art was very close to religion for Pater, not only in its origins, as shown in his Greek Studies (1895) and "Winckelmann," but its modern stages as well, as we see in the "Wordsworth" essay. The writing of Marius the Epicurean was therefore a solemn undertaking, for in it Pater was not only going to justify an early position, showing its place in the development of his thought, but also to give ample expression of his new insight into the spiritual life.

Pater's work bears from first to last a strong personal, almost autobiographical impress. We have been told that the portrait of the fine-souled Marius was suggested by Jackson.[3.]

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1. Benson, op. Cit. P. 200.
2. See Thomas Wright: Life of Walter Pater ii.87. "What, "enquired another, "was your object in writing Marius?" "To show," replied Pater, "the necessity of religion." Cf. The two letters quoted above.
3. According to Thomas Wright, Jackson was the original of Marius. See his Life of Walter Pater ii.59.

But students of Pater can have no doubt that Marius was, according to Pater's frequent method, a projection of his own personality. Indeed though Marius is a Roman, wearing Roman dress and preoccupied by the ideas that filled the minds of the thinking men in the time of Marcus Aurelius, Pater gives in the person of Marius the principal kind of self-revelation of which a man of his temperament was capable. In the career of Marius and in the account of the spiritual and intellectual problems he encountered, Pater was to a large extent writing his own spiritual autobiography. Consequently though his details of Roman dress and customs may be historically accurate, his psychology is that of the nineteenth century. This fact indicates that Pater was chiefly attracted by past periods for the opportunity they gave of self expression, of allowing him to lead a vicarious intellectual life at times of the most critical conflicts of human thought.

As one reads Marius, one is always identifying fragments of Pater's taste and experience. First of all, Marius, who had at an early age lost his father, is brought up in the religion of Numa, and as the head of his house takes a leading part in its religious ceremonies. And the opening chapters of Marius have a strong resemblance to the autobiographical Child in the House (1878). There is the reverence of the child growing up under the Italian sky for his ancestors and the bones of the dead and his sense of the continuity of the generations. There is the love for white and fair things, the dread of snakes, and the pang of remembered petulance at the last parting with his own mother. Again, during Marius's school days at Pisa the Roman youth had, like Pater, an appetite for fame and longed to be a poet. Like Pater again, he put aside his poetical

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ambitions to be a prose writer. Although Marius's work changed from poetry to prose, he retained, like Pater, the poetic temper. Above all in the character of Marius there are enshrined the highest ideals cherished by Pater, the dedication to spiritual vision and the resolve not to add one sigh to the total of human unhappiness. There is the same humanism, the feeling that nothing which has ever interested living men can ever lose its significance; the same grave, contemplative temper which acquires a knowledge of life by intuition rather than by observation. Marius like Pater, is haunted by a wistful desire for religious assurance, hovering between the devotion of the past and the attraction of unknown Gods. At the end one finds a parallel to the experience of Pater in his final surrender to the mystical appetite for sacred things which the Child in the House had felt. Pater himself lived at the last in the habit of the Christian sacraments.

Not only does Pater's work bear an autobiographical impress in its incidents but it is also largely a record of his own intell: :ectual development. Since the background is not emphasised unduly and the characters are few in number, the writer has plenty of scope for elaborating his own thoughts. Pater's mind was naturally sensitive to beauty and fastidious in judging and expressing it. So all his work is in some sense an appreciation.[2] From Arnold, Pater accepts the dictum that the critic's aim is to "see the object as it really is" but his special case is for the vision that sees."What, exactly what, is this?" Arnold might be supposed to ask at the

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1. See Marius Chap. VI "Euphuism".
2. The term appreciation Pater took for his own. The word explains itself as the right attitude in literary criticism,which starts from any attitude of mind, wistful and brooding,but never arrogant. Be: coming conscious of beauty in a work of art, it seeks not so much to carve out the truth as to distil its virtue.

analytical moment. Pater's question is "What, exactly what, is this to me?" Such a mind as Pater's must necessarily afford a fine arena for the conflict between idealistic aestheticism and idealistic religion. The good is the enemy of the best. It is clearly his attempt to reconcile these two ideals of aestheticism and religion that gives him, from the ethical and religious point of view, his great importance. This attempt at reconciliation is the purpose of Marius the Epicurean.

Marius begins with orthodoxy - the orthodoxy of his boyhood - but, through speculating about life, he becomes an intellectual epicurean. Finding that epicureanism fails him, he passes to stoicism; then he becomes a kind of atheist, next turns to Christian humanism, and, as death approaches, draws nearer to a real faith in some unseen power, thus attaining the honours of martyrdom.

There are in the main three spiritual stages through which Marius passes on his journey towards this goal. The first stage is the development of his conscience. From his earliest days, Marius was acquainted with those elementary conditions of life - seed time and harvest, morning and evening and the labours in the field - a reverence for which formed a great part of primitive religion. There were signs, too, even in those earliest days of sympathy for the sufferings of others, especially of dumb creatures. This laid the basis, or was itself an early sign, of a view of life which was always present to him, namely, that pain was in some way an integral part of the world, and that true goodness consisted largely of tender thoughts and tender actions towards the afflicted. It was in deference to this feeling of humanity towards dumb creatures that as

a boy he destroyed the snares with which he was wont to entrap the wild birds. "A white bird," his mother once told him, looking at him gravely, " a bird which he must carry in his bosom across a crowded public place - his own soul was like that;"[1.]

Henceforth he had a vague fear of some unexplored evil ever dogging his foot-steps. On his journey to Rome the vague misgiv: :ings took shape in one definite experience, a narrow escape from death.[2.] Later he saw the Emperor sitting impassive at the glad: :iatorial show, writing and reading, and wondered at the tolerance, "which seemed to Marius to mark Marcus Aurelius as his inferior now and for ever on the question of righteousness; to set them on opposite sides, in some great conflict."[3.] Again Marius was filled with sickening horror at the sight of the captives in the procession and at one of so lofty a spirit as the Emperor's taking his place in the midst of so barbarous a ceremony.[4.] When an irrational fear of enemies turns into a habit of reasoning on the rights and wrongs of actions and of judging behaviour this is a sign that conscience has developed and that its possessor will soon attain to a religious interpretation of life.

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1. Marius (Macmillan edition : 1913) Vol. i.P. 22.

2. "From the steep slope a heavy mass of stone was detached after some whisperings among the trees above his head, and rushing down through the stillness fell to pieces in a cloud of dust cross the road just behind him, so that he felt the touch upon his heel." Marius vol. i P. 165.

3. Marius i. 240.

4. See Marius vol. ii chap. XVII. "The Triumph of Marcus Aurelius."

Another stage in the spiritual development of Marius is the growth of his sense of the eternal companion or rather of the Father: :hood of God. He was never satisfied with the light thrown on the world by pure reasoning, nor with belief in mere idealised abstract: :ions. For him the universe was neither mechanical nor abstract but a living reality. At first, however, this was only a vague sentiment, but after a certain night of perfect sleep Marius awakes in the morning sunlight, with the joyful waking of childhood. He feels the presence, as it were, of that eternal, invisible companion of whom the stoic philosopher and Emperor spoke. He feels that behind all the complexity of life, "behind the evil of mechanical and material order, but only just behind it,"[1] there moves a guide, a Father of men. He felt that his life could never be quite the same again, and that only in the light of this hope could he appre: :hend the secret of life's pilgrimage.

The third stage is the spiritual development of Marius in his actual contact with Christianity. This is, indeed, the inevitable sequel of such spiritual development as the growth of conscience, and the sense of the Fatherhood of God. Marius's contact with Christianity is introduced by contrasting pictures of "Two Curious Houses." The first of these was the pagan house of Apuleius, whose subtle and brilliant system of ideas seemed like a ladder between earth and heaven. But Marius discovered that he wanted the thing itself and not its mere shadow, a life of realised ideals and not a dialectic. The second house was the villa of Cecilia, where all the Christian graces abounded. He began to discern the source of that quiet happiness of which he had always

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1. Marius ii. 64.

been conscious in his friend Cornelius, and in the gathering at Cecilia's house, where the company, and among them, children - are singing, Marius recognises the same glad expansion of a joyful soul. Christian love, self ascrifice and radiant hope contrasted favourably with the hopelessness and hardness of pagan philosophies. The humanity and fulness of life imparted by Christian faith appealed strongly to him. And so Marius witnessed for the first time the spectacle of "divine service,"[1] and realised how peaceful Christian: :ity was. This is indeed a very fine passage in which Pater describes "divine service" as Marius attended it:[2] the mixture of ranks, all made level by faith, hope and charity, Then Narius was called upon to suffer for his faith, such as it was. Perse: :cution of a fierceness hitherto unknown was suffered by the Church. Marius himself heard one read the letters from the churches of Lyons and Vienne, including the story of Blandina, the Christian girl, who died under the tortures of the arena, whispering with her last breath, "I am Christ's."[3]

In the end Marius is brought to his Pisgah - the mount of vision, though he does not actually set foot within the promised land. That act of surrender, by which Cornelius is delivered and Marius goes to death is not the result of an impulse, but at act of self-sacrifice.

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1. See Marius ii chap. XXVI.

2. Because there is less literary source material here, Pater ob: :viously drew upon the ritualistic observances of the Anglican and Catholic Churches, placing them in a Roman setting and weaving them into the fabric of his story to produce a harmonious whole. See Wright, op. cit., Vol. ii, p. 84.

3. Marius vol. ii p. 193.

Indeed Marius is not converted to christianity at first sight, but quietly accepts it as that secret after which his pagan idealism has been groping all the time.

In view of the progress which Marius makes from one philo: :sophy to another it is strange that Pater should have chosen to call him Marius "the Epicurean". For Marius is neither an Epicurean as far as sensuous and sensual pleasures are concerned, nor is he an epicurean in the sense that the epicurean philosophy is a way of life to him, according to the value of which he tests experience. He is an epicure mainly in the sense that he is an epicure of philosophies. Or it may be that the titleis meant to signify that epicureanism is a natural stage in one's spiritual development towards christianity.

Thomas Moore's Epicurean has a titular resemblance to Marius the Epicurean but it can scarcely be regarded as a philosophical novel. It is rather a highly romantic story with a philosophical element. The epicureanism which is introduced in it is a more degenerate variety than the philosophy Pater describes, and is synonymous with a refined pleasure-seeking which masquerades as a philosophical cult. There is little resemblance between the psychological development of Marius and the very melodramatic incidents of the Epicurean - the hero's descent into the subterranean depths of a pyramid, his thrilling escape with Alethe the priestess of Isis, their voyage through the luxuriant scenery of Nile, whichMoore describes with a wealth of local colour, their residence with a hermit, and Alethe's death in a persecution of the Christians. Yet as in Marius, the hero does undergo a spiritual change. The Epicurean dissimilar as it is in theme and tone from Marius, may be regarded as an anticipation of the romance which reveals the philosophical and religious cross-currents of a definite historical period. By purging this type

of novel of ultra-romantic features, amplifying and emphasising the philosophical content, and changing a simple tale into a complex novel, later writers transformed Moore's comparatively crude be: :ginnings into the philosophical novel. In Moore the romantic ele: :ment is predominant; in Kingsley and Newman there is a better balance of romance and philosophy; and in Pater we come to the Philosophical novel where romantic interest has but a slight place.

Newman's Callista published thirty years earlier suggests an interesting comparison with Marius. Newman's work set in third-century Africa resembles Pater's in so far as both novels show the impact of rival philosophies and religions on the minds of characters. Yet Marius is more an appreciation of different philosophical systems and a subtle analysis of their successive effect on the mind and soul of the hero; Callista is not so much an exposition of Christianity and rival religions as an account of the consequences involved by the profession of the christian faith in the third century. It exhibits the conflict between paganism and Christianity in a more active form than Marius. Except for the intervention of persecutors at the end the conflict traced in Marius is internal, whereas the attitude of the mob and of the Roman Government towards Christianity occupies an important place in Callista, although the spiritual experiences of the heroine and of Aegillus reveal internal conflict as well. Pater and Newman wrote with different purposes. Pater puts himself in the position of a serious, young Roman whose search for spiritual satisfaction leads him to try one philosophy after another, evaluating each in term, and finally recognising without much enthusiasm the superiority of the Christian position. Newman wrote

expressly to exhibit the relations between Christianity and pagan: :ism from a catholic point of view. Hence his work has more of the nature of a homily than Marius, as it is informed by a devot: :ional spirit. It is more dramatic in method, there is more dialogue, and its scenes are more vivid, especially the anti-christian riot of the mob in Sicca. But Callista is simpler in its psychology than Marius; the reactions of the characters towards spiritual influences are less subtly traced. Yet Callista and Marius are both examples of historical novels in which little interest is shown in historical events except in so far as they provide a background to the spiritual development of the characters. "It(Callista) has little in it of actual history" writes Newman, "and not much claim to antiquarian research, yet it has required more reading than may appear at first sight."[1] Newman does give an outline of the attitude of the Roman Emperors towards Christianity, the tolerance of some Emperors and the persecution of others, but historical details, as in Marius, are of minor import: :ance. More attention is paid to the setting of the customs of the people and to the descriptions of the topography of the country.

But in Marius the historical background is sketched in more faintly than in any other work that may be included in the category of historical novels. No historical event is described in detail; incidents are merely alluded to in passing. Thus Marcus Aurelius leaves Rome to take part in the fighting on the Danube frontier, and there is a brief description of his return in triumph. But beyond this there is no direct interest apparent in

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1. See Callista: advertisement, sep. 13, 1855. Vii.

the military and political affairs of the period. Neither are the historical characters introduced, so to speak, for their historic interest, as say Queen Elizabeth is in Kenilworth. Mar: :cus Aurelius appears as the philosopher, the Stoic tolerant of other creeds, rather than as the ruler and administrator. Yet, if no attempt is made to embody historical incidents, Pater suggests the historical background in a different way. Compared with Scott, he deals briefly with external accessories, such as costume, scenery and customs, but he gives enough of them to local: :ise the novel in space and time. It opens with a description of the ritual followed in worshipping the ancestral gods, and later we find short accounts of such features of Roman life, as a banquet and a gladiatorial show.

Yet the social background fades into significance in com: :parison with the emphasis laid upon the philosophical and relig: :ious forces of the time. Under the tolerant reign of the Emporar Marcus, religions were flowing into Rome like rivers into the sea; and, as a result, many cults existed side by side, such as the old religion of Numa, of the hearth and the vestal virgins; the worship of Isis, the Egyptian Goddess of fecundity; the med: :ical cult of Aesculapius; Mithraism; Judaism; and the new Christianity, which free for the time being from persecution was rapidly gaining converts and extending its influence. These numerous creeds testify, indeed, to the necessity for some spiritual satisfaction, and many were trying to find it in the Greek philo: :sophies of Stoicism or Epicureanism.

Pater's picture of primitive Christianity is not

altogether convincing, for there are few hints in his pages of the militant faith of its devotees which in course of time was to con: :quer the world. On the contrary it possesses a tender and chaste reserve and moral beauty and persuasiveness which appeal more than manifestations of deadly earnestness might have done. Nevertheless Pater made a fortunate choice in his period, for at an earlier date Marius would scarcely have come in contact with Christianity, whereas at a later date he would not have found a similar state of spiritual and moral purity in the Church.

From the author's description of it as a philosophical ro: :mance, J.F. Shorthouse's John Inglesant would seem to present an interesting comparison with Marius, which it preceded in date of publication by some four years but Shorthouse's tale set in seven: :teenth century England and Italy and dealing with the religious struggles of the time has not a great deal in common with Pater's novel. True, there is a general resemblance in that both works record the impact of philosophical or religious ideas on the mind of the hero, but whereas Pater is concerned with philosophy and religion, Shorthouse is almost exclusively concerned with religion, although there is some references to the philosophy of Plato and of Hobbes. There is much more action in John Inglesant; the hero is not an almost detached spectator of the life and ideals of the exponents of various faiths, but takes an active part in the conflicts of the time. The historical element, especially in the part set in England which describes some aspects of the Civil War, such as Charles I's negotiations with the Irish, is more pronounced than in Marius where very few allusions are made to contemporary historical

events. In facts John Inglesant is definitely a romance and invests the activities of the Jesuits and the High Church move: :ment with a romantic interest, whereas Marius treats philosophical questions in a more detached spirit.

Yet though John Inglesant has more of the conventional structure of a novel than Marius, both works, in different degrees, give religious and philosophical elements more space than they customarily receive in works of fiction. Indeed, Shorthouse makes it clear in his preface that his purpose is not to write a novel with the ordinary pattern. Characters are not delineated for their own sake or created in the round, but introduced with the ulterior motive of illustrating religious or philosophical questions. Neither, he says, will the reader find sparkling dialogue in the book. Sometimes in John Inglesant the dialogue is fairly natural and there is more of it than in Marius, but at other times it falls into set discourses. Different as the two novels may be in some respects,[1.] they both stand outside the conventional category of fiction and cannot with justice be judged by the standards applicable to other novels.

It would certainly be uncritical to judge the plot of Marius by the same standards as we would apply to a novel of the ordinary type. Pater's work does not profess to be a narrative setting forth the relationship of a group of characters, with event succeeding

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1. In the cultured grace of their style Pater and Shorthouse may be compared, although the prose of Pater is the more exquisite and polished. Shorthouse made an attempt to initiate the idiom of the seventeenth century prose, whereas Pater wrote in his natural style. But since it has been discovered that Shorthouse took without acknow: :ledgment passages from seventeenth century writers, diminished credit must be assigned him for the artificial flavour of his style.

event until a climax is reached. The action is of an internal nature and psychological influences and reactions take the place of incidents. Thus much that would be irrevelant and intolerable in an ordinary novel is quite permissable in Marius and fits into the artistic structure. The version of "Cupid and Psyche", the discourses of Marcus Aurelius, and the dialogue between Lucian and Hermotinus could only be regarded as digressions retarding the action of a novel dealing with outward events. Yet they occupy a place of real importance in the design of Marius, for they illustrate the forces acting on Marius and shaping his spiritual life. And the novel does show a development in so far as there is a progress towards a climax in the inward life of Marius. Waiv: :ing the question of the relative value of the successive ways of life which Marius adopts we cannot help regarding the transition from the one to the other as natural and almost inevitable. A more satisfying end might have been given to the story, had Marius entered into full communion with the Christians, though such a conclusion might have been foreign to the scrupulously impartial attitude Pater shows to all the philosophies which attract Marius. It might have suggested that there is a certain halting-point in man's spiritual journey, instead of a glimpse of the truth. On the whole the somewhat hasty end which Pater engineers seems quite in keeping with what goes before.

Perhaps it is failure to grasp the peculiar construction of a philosophical novel, in which exposition of a philosophy is more important than a dramatic scene, an argument more important than an

exciting incident and the temperament of the hero more important than his physical appearance that has led to sweeping criticisms of the structure of Marius, such as the following passage by Mr T.S.Eliot, which strikes one as unduly severe: ".....Its (Marius's) method is a number of fresh starts; its content is a hodge-podge of the learning of the classical don, the impressions of the sensitive holi: :day visitor to Italy, and a prolonged flirtation with the liturgy." 1.

But, strictly speaking, Marius is less an organic than a series of essays, for in a very real sense, many of its chapters, though unified by the end, are simply essays on various subjects. Occasionally as in the brilliant and lucid pages on Cyrenaicism and Cynicism, the narrative is discarded, the hero is forgotten, and the author produces an essay which might have come out of a volume of "Studies in Classical Philosophy." and the chapter on "Euphuism" might well be placed along with his "Essay on Style" in Appreciations.

Nevertheless if there are digressions in Marius, which violate all the canons of narrative, they are largely responsible for the fascination of the book; because they are themselves models of literary grace and we are even content to forget Marius for many pages while we read the beautifully light and poetic version of "Cupid and Psyche" bodily taken from Apuleius's Golden Ass,or listen to the oration of Marcus Aurelius, cunningly developed out of his Meditations. These are in the highest level of Pater's art, and "are among the rare things of literature; although even here there is a certain taint, an insinuating betrayal of the truth in the fictitious charms lent to these philosophies." 2.

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1. "The Place of Pater" in The Eighteen-Eighties (Ed.W.de la Mare.) P. 104.
2. "Apuleius may have been, in a sense, decadent,but he was not lang: :urous as Pater presents him in translation, and Marcus Aurelius is in expression crabbed and scholastic and very far from the smooth periods of his imitator"-see the Drift of Romanticism by E.P.More (New York,1913) P. 92.

But nowhere is Pater's peculiar ability seen to better advantage than in the delicious Socratic dialogue between Lucian and Hermotinus. Neither Berkeley nor Landor nor Fitzgerald employed the dialogue better. Pater's style in the dialogue is quite in the manner of Plato with its concreteness of language and its use of apologies. If the studies of these men, and the translations from their works along with the discussion of Epicurean, Stoic and Christian ideas, were separated from the context and printed together they would undoubtedly make an excellent book of "Miscellaneous Studies."

As for the characters, it may be said that there is consider: :able individuality . about the portraits of the sad and splendid Emperor Marcus Aurelius, Lucian the laughing and the conceited Neo-Platonist Apuleius, and even old Fronto, the Emperor's tutor. They live here, lightly and surely touched. The charming picture of Marcus Aurelius himself, fabricated entirely from a bust, the Meditations and the correspondence with Fronto, leaves us with a fuller and more vivid Marcus than we had before. Pater does con: :trive by pathetic and emotional touches, to bring out with wonder: ;ful vividness the human charm of the Emperor, his deep patience, his affectionateness and his devotion to duty. "It may be held a true triumph of a species of historical art, " writes Benson, "to have evolved so real, so dignified, so intensely vivid a figure out of somewhat chill abstractedness that had hitherto surrounded the philosophic Lord of legions, the stoic master of the world."[1] The character of Lucian and Apuleius are elaborated with imaginative details that fill out the historical information available about them.

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1. Benson.P. 101.

Lucian, the gentle ironist, is the more simply described; Apuleius appears from his works half in earnest, half mocking, rather coarse and fantastic, but Pater makes a living person from the catalogue of qualities deducible from his writings.

But the other characters whom Pater felt obliged to invent are less vividly and distinctly drawn than those for whose existence and characteristics there is historical warrant. Flavian and Cornelius are rather types of the man of the world and the christian than individuals. Certainly the clever and licentious Flavian is depicted more elaborately than any other character, but he hardly betrays any signs of animation, such as a hasty or impatient utter: :ance. Yet the death scene of Flavian is capitally worked out. On the last night, Marius lay as usual in the bed beside him, to be near him, if he should seem to need anything. "Is it a comfort," he whispered to the dying lad, "that I shall often come and weep over you?" "Not unless I be aware," he faltered,"and hear your weeping! " [1.]

Cornelius is a christian of a type chastened by persecution and suffering, which bring out the finest traits in his character. He is not so important in himself as for his influence on the hero, who perceives that Cornelius's faith gives him an inward peace and strength which sustains him in the midst of the corruption of Roman life. The most delicate and suggestive feature in Pater's descrip: :tion of Cornelius is that Marius observed that he was always singing to himself. It was to Marius quite a new kind of singing. It was rather the overflow of some quiet and generous emotion. He

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1. Marius vol. i. P. 119.

would begin to sing as though at the moment he were remembering some private reason for being happy, not that he ever really for: :got it, in something the same manner as Faithful and Christian in Pilgrim's Progress. But Cornelius appears priggish to some critics and lacking in vitality. Admittedly Pater, one thinks, has not quite succeeded in overcoming the difficulty of portraying a noble character without making him superhumanly good: Cornelius is too much of the perfect knight with none of the human frailties, such as a proneness to anger and an acute sense of the temptations of sensual pleasure, which have characterised some of the greater saints.

Marius himself is not clearly drawn from the outside; in other words, the character of Marius is not conceived in the round, hardly even in the flat. Scott, Dickens, Thackeray, and George Eliot describe their heroes almost as minutely as a police-station bill does, but Pater never mentions the physical appearance of Marius from beginning to end. Normally the novelist betrays his characters by means of their actions and speech as in the case of R.L. Stevenson's Master of Ballantrae and Scott's Dugald Dalgetty. Even Scott's heroes when they have not the vitality of his humbler creations, such as farmers and fisher-folk,receive plenty of opportunities for re: :vealing temselves in action. Quentin Durward and Captain Waverley, for instance, are both men of action and well enough portrayed from the outside. But Marius lacks the substantiality that a knowledge of his physical appearance might have given the reader. He is a shadowy figure, who seldom comes alive, and for the most part of the novel he is revealed, as it were, by an interpreter. He has no occasion to exercise his will, but drifts from one place to another

animated by a faint curiousity. In the end he accepts martyrdom rather than achieves it by his own volition. Yet on account of his mental activity and his moral qualities, his charity and his love of beauty, he lives in the memory. With time Marius seems to gain in solidity, and the reader builds up his personality from the hints given by Pater. If Marius is compared with other Roman characters drawn by English writers, it becomes obvious that none of them is so tender and sensitive. Most of them, like Shakespeare's Brutus are drawn according to the stoic pattern, and are notable for their courage and manliness rather than their aesthetic sensi: :bility, though occasionally we find examples of the voluptuous aesthete such as Antony.

Marius presents an interesting comparison with Tito in George Eliot's Romola. Both are cultured, intelligent young men living in critical times, the one when christianity begins to challenge pagan philosophies and religions, the other when christianity is being challenged by a revival of ancient philosophy. But the different manner in which these characters are depicted reveal fundamental contrasts in intellectual and artistic outlook between George Eliot and Pater. Whereas in Marius one's interest is directed towards his intellectual and spiritual development, in Tito it is moral experiences that are of the greatest importance. Marius has to estimate the value of conflicting philosophies and judge them by their effects on their devotees. Tito has moral temptations of a more urgent kind to face. Will he follow the dictates of selfish ambition and strive for social eminence and luxury or devote

himself to securing the release of his benefactor? Again will he indulge in sensual pleasures and deceive Tessa or not? Temptations of this kind do not exist for Marius, The Epicureanism which he accepts for a time, does not present itself to him in the demoralising seductive form that a more degraded philosophy of pleasure-seeking does to Tito. "What, looked at closely, was the end of all life, but to extract the utmost sum of pleasure?"[1.] Marius's spirituality, his sense of the divine presence, his profoundly religious nature is totally unlike that of Tito's whose mind" was destitute of that dread which has been erroneously de: :scribed as, if it were nothing higher than a man's animal care for his own skin; That awe of the divine Nemises which was felt by religious pagans ....."[2.] It was natural that Pater being interested in spiritual development rather than in moral conflicts, should have shown Marius's progress as one towards progressively higher spiritual levels, whereas George Eliot, being anxious to show the necessity of moral discipline, represents the career of Tito as one of moral degeneration, as a steady descent from good-natured thoughtlessness to depths of deception, intrigue and crime.

Kingsley's Hypatia may be compared with Marius in so far as both are novels in which the historical background is sketched in mainly to describe the philosophical and religious forces of their respective periods and to reveal the manner in which they affected the minds and souls of men. The theme of both novels is the

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1. Romola (Edinburgh and London: Blackwood edition) i. 175.
2. Romola i. 177.

reaction of a young, impressionable and sensitive mind to those forces. But apart from this resemblance in general motif, the contrasts between Hypatia and Marius are more striking than their similarities. In fact two writers with tempera: :ments more diametrically opposed than Kingsley and Pater could scarcely be found. Pater is the scholar, interested equally in the various modes of viewing the world, and patiently tracing their subtly different effects on the mind of the hero. Kingsley is no disinterested spectator, but a man with a message to impart and prejudices to justify. Hence a didactic intention, conspicuously absent in Pater, is clearly apparent in his work. Pater presumably wrote Marius because he wanted to experience in his own consciousness the intellectual and spiritual influences to which a young Roman was exposed, whereas Kingsley underlines very strongly his purpose of warning his contemporaries against "old foes with new faces."

Yet if Kingsley's mind was less fine in texture than that of Pater, he had some traits which probably equipped him better for the task of writing an historical novel. Pater is subjective in method; his descriptions of the setting are brief and general: :ised and suffused with an air of langour, as if they were blended with the emotional reactions of the observer. Kingsley, on the other hand, is emminently successful in his detailed and colourful descriptions of settings. Pater was what Jung would term an "introvert" whereas Kingsley was an "extravert". Con: :sequently their interests took different directions. Kingsley describes the environment, the appearance, the conversation, and

the actions of his characters, whereas Pater refers but slightly to these features and explores dim, half realised states of conscious: :ness. Kingsley's interest was wider than that of Pater; he was interested in the actual details of daily life, in much the same manner as Scott was, and like him he makes full use of accessories, such as costumes which provide local colour, ~~as it were.~~ Pater, however, makes less use of such accessories than any other historical novelist. He contrives to do with the irreducible minimum of external features. Pater illustrates the conflicts of philosophies within the mind of the hero, whereas Kingsley shows how the acceptance of a system of belief stimulates men to action. He dramatises mental and spiritual conflicts to a greater extent than Pater and indicates the passions and violent actions they stimulate.

Kingsley represents the throbbing life of Alexandria, peopled with real men and women not living in the gloomy resignation of paganism but experiencing hopes and joys, Pater represents Roman life in a comparatively subdued and lifeless fashion; his characters have the grace and elegance of delicately moulded statuary but they have not the warmth of life. Kingsley's spontaneous vigour is not necessar: :ily superior to the delicate art and scholarship of Pater, but it gives more vitality to his work. The merits of Marius are quite different from those of Hypatia. They consist in its cultured, polished style, its artistic poise and restraint, and the writer's scholarly sympathy with classical thought. Hypatia is much broader and more energetic in its sweep; its crowded stage represents the bustling life of a whole period, wuthout obscuring the principal characters whose ex: :periences form the thread of the plot. Marius is narrower in scope; its stage is far less crowded and it winds leisurely along with little apparent plot.

III.

Gaston de Latour, which Pater begun shortly after the completion of Marius the Epicurean, remained a fragment. Many writers owing to death and other causes have left stories unfinished - Dickens and Thackeray for instance; but there is hardly another instance of story being voluntary abandoned by its author after a large portion had already appeared in print.[1] Pater was probably dissatisfied with his design; for after completing six chapters, he laid the work aside, and gave himself up to the composition of the "Essay on Style",[2] And at the time of his death, only seven chapters were complete enough to be published. Five chapters were published in Macmillan's Magazine from June to October 1889. The seventh chapter first appeared as an independent article, entitled "Giordano Bruno" in the Fortnightly Review, August 1889, and was afterwards revised for inclusion in Gaston de Latour. The sixth chapter did not appear till the whole fragment was published in 1896 and apparently never received the revision Pater was accustomed to give his work.

[Prosper Mérimée, one of Pater's favourite author's and one on whom Pater delivered a lecture in 1890[3] had written a historical romance, The Chronique du Regne de Charles IX (1829), which is set in the same period as Gaston de Latour. In spite of its cumbrous title, which suggests an erudite historical study rather a work of fiction, Mérimée's novel has more romance and adventure in it than Gaston. It gives a fuller description of the historical background,

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1. Appeared in the Fortnightly Review Dec. 1888, and prefixed to Appreciation (1889).
2. See C.L. Shadwell's Explanation in the Preface.
3. Reprinted in Studies in European Literature being the Taylorian Lectures 1889-1899. (Oxford: 1900) pp. 31-53.

him with most of the information necessary for portraying that writer, but Montaigne by Bayle St. John (1858) might have been of some use to him, as well as Emerson's essay on "Montaigne or the Sceptic" in Representative Men (1883). For Ronsard's portrait Pater could draw material from his Oeuvres and from the articles on Ronsard Sainte-Beuve included in the Causenes de Lundi (1857-62) while he could utilise Bruno's metaphysical works for the chapter on that philosopher. The principal edition of Bruno's works, edited by Fioventino, Tocco and Vitelli appeared in Naples between 1879 and 1891. A few years before Gaston was written a study of Bruno's philosophy, entitled Giordano Bruno Weltanschaunng, by H. Brunnhofer, appeared in Leipzig (1883). It is worth noting also that this period of French history must have aroused a considerable amount of attention in France and England about the time Pater wrote Gaston, for the bibliography to the Cambridge Modern History. Vol, III. (1904) cites a comparatively large number of articles in magazines and periodicals between 1880 and 1890 on the subject of the Huguenots and the Catholics.

Gaston de Latour[1] resembles Marius the Epicurean in spirit and method. It also is rather of a series of essays unified by their relation to the psychological development of the hero than a novel proper. The main difference between it and Marius lies in their periods, in each of which different philosophies are naturally in vogue. In Marius Christianity is the young and vigorous faith challenging the philosophies and cults of the Roman world; in Gaston de Latour it is the established faith torn by schisms and threatened by the rise of scepticism. Consequently Marius's progress towards the church is reversed in the case of

1. For its sources see Appendix B: VI. P. 411.

Gaston, although the latter might ultimately have returned to the service of the altar. But in both cases the interest of the novel lies in the study of successive stages of their intellectual and spiritual development, each stage being marked by the impact on their minds of a new philosophy or by the result of contact with a stimulating personality. And, as in Marius, the various philosophies are sketched and analysed in a critical fashion, along with a study of their psychological effects. It is as if Pater was attempting a study of philosophical systems or attitudes, combining subtly an objective and subjective approach to them, and giving for the purpose of this study a concrete existence to a projection of his own personality.

Though Gaston resembles Marius in spirit and method, yet it differs from the latter in some respects. First of all, in Marius there is no love story and hardly any feminine interest. Apart from the faint picture of Marius's mother and some transitory glimpses of the Empress Faustina and the Christian widow Cecilia, there is an entire absence of the feminine element. But in Gaston, the young hero is attracted by pretty looks, which ends in a forced marriage. This love affair of Gaston's is described by Pater in a very hurried and perfunctory fashion, but it might have had complications later in his spiritual life, particularly as his wife was a Huguenot. Again the young Frenchman is a warmer, more human, character than the young Roman; and in place of the marble coldness of Marius's surroundings, we have the colour and glow of the fantastic day of the Pléiade - sunny France, instead of imposing Rome - the sparkling Pantheist, Bruno, instead of the reserved Stoic, Marcus Aurelius.

Pater's declared object in writing Marius was to show the "necessity of religion," and a similar motive seems to have been present in his conception of the scheme which was to have been carried out in Gaston. "Marius had illustrated the contact of the best results of Greek philosophy with the new doctrines of Christianity, Gaston was to show how the later revival of Letters, in the form and with the issues which the movement assumed in a thinker like Montaigne, might be subdued and overcome by the spirit of the same faith"[1] Since the appearance of Marius a great change had occurred in Pater; whereas in 1885 he was only near the entrance to the Church, in 1888 he approached close to the altar. Toward the end of his life Pater is ~~reported~~ said to have been occupied mainly with the Bible, the Prayer Book, and Breviary[2]. He was curious about prayers for the departed, and about the author of them;[3] he took sides in the ritualistic controversy over the "Lambeth Judgment";[4] he attended High Church and Catholic services at the churches of St. Barnabas and St. Aloysius. His friend, Dr. Bussell, vice-president of Brasenose, assures us of Pater's full return to Christianity and his disapproval of "any symptom of a Rationalising spirit".[5] Has Gaston been completed we might have had a Confession of faith impressive and convincing. It would have shown how in the end Christianity may prevail, not only over such a paganism as Marius was bred in, but even over a scepticism so deep-rooted and subtle as Montaigne's. Thus again, Gaston, in spite of its disquisitions on art, literature, and philosophy would have been, if completed, like Marius, a religious historical novel.

As far as the introduction of historical events is concerned,

1. The Athenaeum Oct. 17, 1896, p. 518.
2. Wright ii. p. 125.
3. Ibid. p. 143.
4. Ibid. p. 176.
5. Ibid. p. 198. cf. Benson p. 23.

Gaston, no more than Marius, is an orthodox historical novel. But there are more frequent allusions to historical events in Gaston than in the earlier work. Perhaps because events in sixteenth-century France proceeded more directly from religious causes than was the case in the time of Marcus Aurelius. "The Life of Gaston de Latour was almost to coincide with the duration of the Religious Wars,"[1] but it was no purpose of Pater's to describe the course of the conflict between Catholics and Huguenots. This struggle is only referred to in order to remind one that the character of Gaston was formed in an environment disturbed by the passions and quarrels of religious enemies. A rapid contrast is drawn between this disturbed society and the previous generations which had enjoyed in peace the cultural fruits of the Renaissance but the course of the story does not develop this contrast. An event of cardinal importance like the Massacre of St. Bartholomew's Eve, which Scott or Dickens would have elaborated in vivid detail, is hurried over by Pater. He mentions the attempt to assassinate Admiral Coligny, and briefly refers to the fury of the attack on the Huguenots, in which Gaston's wife almost perished. Indeed, contemporaneous events are alluded to in something the same manner as Philip Guedalla employs in his biographies, when he sketches the background against which his subject pursues his way. Again, Pater mentions the siege of Chartres by the Huguenots in 1567 in a quite perfunctory fashion. It serves no purpose in the story, except possibly to give a hint of what was happening around Gaston.

On the whole one feels that the adjustment of the historical background to the philosophical purpose of the novel would not have been so well accomplished as in the case of Marius. It was not so

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1. Gaston (London: Macmillan, 1910). p. 15.

easy for a refined and cultured mind to assess with detachment the value of conflicting religions in the sixteenth century as it was in the second century, when a philosophical epicureanism was more probable. At least it would have been more difficult to determine the comparative spiritual attractions of Catholicism and Protestantism, without introducing a considerable amount of historical detail to illustrate them. No doubt Pater would have solved the problem by concentrating on Gaston's spiritual life, and taking for granted enough knowledge on the reader's part of contemporary events to make allusions to them sufficient. [Scott with his introduction, notes, and halts in the narrative to explain the contemporary situation was apparently willing to take little historical knowledge on the part of his readers for granted, - probably quite justly as he was writing for a popular audience.] Pater presumably never expected that his novels would appeal to a large number of readers unequipped with historical and philosophical knowledge. On the other hand, he may never have had this consideration in mind, but introduced historical events sparingly because they were foreign to his artistic purpose, which was to achieve a form of self-expression by recreating mental and spiritual experiences one of his peculiar temperament would undergo in critical ages of conflict between philosophers and religions.

If one may judge by the few chapters Pater had finished, the design of Gaston seems more comprehensive than that of Marius. Clerical life at Chartres, shifting religious creeds, the Huguenot wars, the Massacre of St. Bartholomew's Eve, the literature of the Pléiade, the philosophy of Montaigne and Giordano Bruno - all combined to crowd the canvas and to push the hero, Gaston, into a

shadowy background. It is true that Pater had enough power to fill in, heighten and enrich faint outlines, but he lacked the power of "selecting typical touches from great masses of detail".[1] He might have realised that the period he has chosen is crowded with salient figures, and that having introduced characters like Charles IX, Coligni, Catharine, Henry, Margaret and so forth, he would require the swift intuition of such a writer as Scott to cope with the increasing complexity of his plot. Indeed the patient and cumulative toil of a minute and delicate writer like Pater needed quieter settings, in which he could keep the external events subordinate to the unified development of his thought. In shorter pieces, like his critical essays and the Imaginary Portraits Pater was eminently successful but his minute methods were inadequate for a larger canvas. True, in Marius he succeeded because he had the tact to avoid mistakes in following the cross-currents of Roman life in the second century by making his setting sufficiently generalised and introducing characters - like Apuleius, who were not difficult to understand. But the detailed material of Gaston is not assimilated into a sharply outlined and clearly executed picture.

In the actual events of the story Gaston follows Marius pretty closely. It begins with Gaston's boyhood, describes his ancestral home, and shows him finding spiritual nourishment in the religion of his forefathers. As Marius goes to school and is influenced by Flavian, Gaston is educated in the episcopal school at Chartres and is affected by the different types of his school-fellows there. Gaston meets Ronsard, Montaigne and Bruno as Marius comes in contact with Apuleius, Aurelius and Lucian. Both are

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1. Benson, P. 141.

drawn towards the capitals of their country and take part in its intellectual life. Again Gaston resembles Marius in its lack of a conventional plot. There is a development, but it is a psychological development not one of action or incidents. Nor is the relationship of characters of any importance as it normally is in the novel. Gaston's mind is studied, as it were, in isolation; the influence of the thoughts of other people on it is recorded, but no attempt is made to show how he and the other characters are affected by this emotional reactions to one another. In its plan Gaston is more of an intellectual and spiritual biography than a novel designed with a view to give a complete picture of an individual, a group of characters or a cross-section of society.

But, at all events, we have three finished portraits of Ronsard, Montaigne and Bruno in Gaston as we have those of Apuleius, Marcus Aurelius and Lucian in Marius. Indeed both novels are more studies of these philosophers and writers than histories of their heroes, Marius and Gaston. Pater is extremely successful in introducing into Gaston de Latour these characters from histories of literature and philosophy. The chapters on these meetings abound in lucid portraiture and exposition. With the aid of some conversation, action, or personal description he shows us the home and garden of Ronsard, the study of Montaigne and the characteristics of Giordano Bruno, almost as seen through the eyes of a contemporary. The chapter describing his visit with his three friends to the poet Ronsard is one of the finest pieces of writing in Pater's work. It was the Ronsard of middle age and failing health the young man saw, his court days over,

as also were his creative days. Gaston looked at the first book of the never finished Franciade in jerky, feverish gouty manuscripts, watched the face all nerve, distressed nerve of the man who had brought youth to French poetry. All is very delicate and yet real. Ronsard truly lives in Pater's pages.

Gaston visited Ronsard and Montaigue about 1569, when the latter had just begun to write his Essays, the contents of some of which he communicated to his guest in "The Conversation begun that morning and lasting for nine months"[1]. Intercourse with Montaigne shattered the foundations of Gaston's beliefs. But the portrait of the "sceptical saint", as Emerson called him, is one of Pater's best; the hospitality, the talk at the Chateau, are admirably described.

~~The~~ In presenting the philosophy of Montaigne and Bruno, Pater selects those aspects that appealed most strongly to him, with the result that he omits some important features, as, for instance, the broad humanism that underlies Montaigne's scepticism. The latter's attitude was too complex to be summed up by the phrase, "Suspended Judgment"[2]. It was as much the assertion of the right to think as an expression of scepticism. But Pater concentrates on his scepticism, on his position of wise ignorance, which he regards as the refuge sought by one who had been too often deceived to be optimistic. His inadequate presentation of the complexity of Montaigne's thought may also be partly due to his tendency to impressionism. In the case of Bruno also Pater is content with a partial account of his philosophy, the development of which he does not attempt to trace, but concentrates on his

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1. Gaston p. 90.
2. See Gaston chap. V.

"doctrine of indifference."[1] Bruno's speculations had led him to the point where differences vanish and opposites are merged in God. At this point, matter and spirit, freedom and necessity are reconciled, and the usual distinctions drawn between them seem superficial. Gaston, however, cannot accept this reconciling of opposites, and is unable to turn evil into good or to ignore the aesthetic difference between the precious and the base.

Gaston is placed in the sixteenth century, but he belongs to no particular time; he is a type that recurs in every age, a reverent and sensitive nature, peculiarly responsive to the religious influences that mould his youth, and also later to the new impulses and ideas in the air, His sympathies extend both to traditional beliefs and to the opposing tendencies of the present, and though these result in a conflict within his own nature he is anxious to achieve their reconcilement. Pater was approaching this stage of Gaston's development when the novel was broken off and never resumed. All the same it is something more than a fragment, for there is enough to indicate the path which Gaston followed in his spiritual journey.

Like Marius, Gaston is in some respects a projection of Pater's own personality. He is sensitive, earnest, and impressionable, "with a strong natural instinct for outward beauty"[2]. Like Marius also he shows "a native impressibility to thesorrow and hazard that are constant and necessary in human life, especially for the poor"[3] "Sorrow came along with

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1. See Gaston chap. VII.
2. Gaston p. 21.
3. Ibid. p. 19.

beauty, a rival of its intricate omnipresence in life".[1] At first he is attached to the Church and asceticism. Then he feels the glamour of the classics, after whivh he turns to philosophy. If his creator had let him finish his career, he would like Marius and Pater himself, undoubtedly have turned back towards Christianity. Indeed, it is hardly too much to say that whatever the character Pater depicts, it is always the author himself who appears upon the canvas. This is true not only of the two historical novels we are discussing, but of the Child in the House, of all the Imaginary Portraits and of Emerald Uthwood. Pater's work was all self-expressive in the last analysis.

IV.

Marius and Gaston are distinguished by the grace of their style. Pater's style is entirely individual; it is a revelation of the possibilities of poetical prose which the English language contains. Certainly the styles of Landor and Newman have much of the qualities of poetry, the former in its dignified phraseology and stately movement, the latter in its luminous and moving oratorical cast. In the seventeenth century Sir Thomas Browne and Jeremy Taylor with their splendour of diction and rhetorical ornament evoked poetic harmonies from their prose medium, as De Quincey did also in the nineteenth century. But the style of Pater is distinct from that of all the prose poets in English. It is not rhetorical and neither is it highly adorned; it has no suggestion of ceremonial splendour. But its rhythm is more subtle and its texture more delicate; it has a greater air of refinement and more sensitiveness than the prose

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1. Gaston p. 23.

of the writers we have enumerated. His "Essay on Style" where he advocates the culmination of artistic and scholarly prose in place of a slap-dash impressionistic manner is the best commentary on his own practice. Flaubert was his master and he followed the French writer's method of writing with the utmost care and labour to achieve the last graces of style. Perhaps owing to his admiration for Flaubert there is an exotic strain apparent in Pater's prose, a delicate flavour of French style.

Yet the manner Pater adopted in Marius and Gaston differs somewhat from his habitual style. It is less elaborate and there are few anthology pieces in the book, such as the passage on the Mona Lisa, and the exquisite description of petals falling from a tree in The Child in the House. Besides it is less marked by his parenthetical and periphrastic mannerisms. Its more condensed and lucid manner is quite appropriate to the gravity of the theme.

Marius and Gaston indicate that Pater as an historical novelist is very much sui generis. In the first place he does not make any serious attempt to secure that "willing suspension of disbelief" by his representation of the life of periods in which his novels are set. In Marius, he is constantly and explicitly drawing a parallel between modern and Roman life as they affected him. True, he does describe the manners, the religious ceremonies, and the spectacles of the Romans, but more in the manner of the essayist than the novelist. Neither historical events nor historical personages play a very prominent part in the novel, in the sense that they affect the fortunes of the

principal characters. Marcus Aurelius, for instance, is well depicted, but his actions never affect the fortunes of Marius, as, say, the commands of Louis XI affect those of Quentin Durward. Pater's historical personages are poets and philosophers instead of the kings, and barons, who figure in the novels of Scott. Again there are no vivid descriptions of historical scenes, such as the storming of the Bastille in A Tale of Two Cities. Indeed, when one considers Marius and Gaston as historical novels one is struck principally by the conventional features of historical fiction which they omit, such as archaisms in the dialogue, and elaborate descriptions of period costume. The past is not presented as it might appear to the eye of a contemporary, but as it appears to one dwelling on it in tender retrospect.

Pater also lacked many of the necessary qualifications of a novelist - ability to construct an organic plot, and to reveal characters directly by their actions and conversation. Consequently one is driven to the conclusion that Marius and Gaston survive not for their merits as history novels, but for the exquisite grace of Pater's style and his subtle study of the philosophic cross-currents at periods of crisis.

In fact it might be more satisfactory to regard Pater as a philosophical rather than historical novelist. Certainly his works are historical novels in the sense that they belong to periods earlier than the time of writing and some attempt is made to suggest the historical and social background of those features. But too scanty attention is paid to those external features which enable the reader to visualize people's way of living in a past epoch. The predominant interest is placed on the philosophies

and to a less extent the religion, religions or religious sects prevalent at the particular period. Hence, if we are to describe a novel by its most strongly emphasised trait, it seems just to describe Pater's works as philosophical novels. Similarly Newman's Callista, which makes no claim to incorporate historical facts, might be better described as a religious than historical novel. If we choose to give the category of historical fiction sufficient elasticity we can include both Pater and Newman in the list of historical novelists, but, on the other hand, it is probably advisable to label their works in another fashion in order to indicate that there is a vast disparity between their novels and those of Scott which fulfil all the canons of the ordinary type of historical fiction.

CHAPTER V111

CONCLUSION

A survey of the historical novels of Thackeray, Dickens, Kingsley, George Eliot, Meredith and Pater leads one to realise the diversity possible within the departments of historical fiction. These differ in important respects from each other and from their predecessors in this genre. Unfortunately none of them has left set prefaces, like those of Scott and Lytton, discussing his views on the blending of history and fiction and his aims. We have to infer from incidental remarks and their finished works what their various conceptions of historical fiction were.

When they sat down to write historical novels, it is certain that they were faced with the same problems as exercised the minds of Scott and Lytton, namely the relation of the historical and the fictitious, and the means of suggesting the historical background; but these problems must have appeared in a different form for them. They had behind them a large body of historical fiction, and if there were not fairly definite conventions that could be followed easily, and if an historical novel could not exactly be written to prescription, there were at least enough examples produced to make the general pattern of the historical novel pretty familiar. Victorian novelists had not like Scott to decide what an historical novel should be.

What they had to decide was how far the existing patterns of historical fiction suited their needs, and how far they ought to introduce variations to express their own special interests. Scott ~~saw that historical fiction should not be more antiquarianism awkwardly wearing a fictitious dress as Strutt had made it do in~~

Queenhoo Hall; but, apart from this negative precedent, he had to work out his own methods. Scott subordinated history to romance, although his strong interest in historical personages and events threatened to disturb this relationship. Lytton claimed that a new type of historical fiction was possible in which romance should be subordinated to history and should only be utilised to give warmth and vitality to historical figures. They had to determine whether the historical background should be sketched chiefly as a relief to the experiences of fictitious characters or whether fictitious elements should be introduced mainly with a view to amplifying and expressing history in a more concrete way. Were their novels to differ from contemporary fiction only in their setting or were they to differ from historical works only in their method?

Thackeray obviously must have had little sympathy with Lytton's theory of historical fiction. He had comparatively little interest in the politics or the religious and military affairs of a past period; but its day-to-day life and its literature, especially that which illustrated its social life interested him prodigiously. Thackeray was always inclined to make shift with the irreducible minimum of the kind of historical facts that figure in ordinary histories. Hence he introduces important historical incidents in a rather perfunctory fashion. He sneers in Barry Lyndon at the practice indulged in by historical novelists, of making drummer boys familiar with the motives and actions of commanders.[1]

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1. See Chap. 11, section of Barry Lyndon. P. 45.

But in Esmond, it is true he makes some concessions to convention by describing, though not in great detail, the campaigns of Marlborough. Though Thackeray was not inclined to rewrite history in terms of fiction, he was not, on the other hand, given to concentrating on romantic feature, such as the discovery of secret marriages and concealed identity and the elaboration of the love-interest. Thackeray was neither historian turned novelist nor a writer bent on extracting romance from history. His attempt to recapture the day-to-day life of the past obviously cut out the unusual, even if his own taste had not been towards the matter-of-fact and the cynical.

He was realistic in outlook and not impressed by the pageantry of courts and the glory of battles. His main interest was in the manners, the customs, and the amusements of society, especially the upper and the middle classes, and in observing how much the eighteenth century in these respects resembled his own day.

Consequently the impulse to write historical novels set in the eighteenth century came from the fascination that age had for him, and no doubt from other causes, such as the desire to imitate its novelists and essayists,(it is worth noting that Thackeray was a talented parodist[1]) and the natural imaginative desire to realise its environment most vividly by peopling it with fictitious characters. But Thackeray's attitude to environment was different from that of George Eliot, who found the realisation of environment necessary to complete her visualisation of characters.

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1. He wrote a parody of Ivanhoe, entitled Rebecca and Rowena (1850) - no doubt the finest of its kind in English literature.

Thackeray had more interest in the social setting for its own sake and could have sketched it like an essayist without reference to the characters peopling it, had he so desired. Owing to the special direction of Thackeray's interest in the past he added a note of realism to historical fiction. He was not without romantic traits and sometimes invested the past with an idealised air, but on the whole his detailed descriptions of the social life of particular periods give his pictures of the past a greater impression of actuality than one finds in any of the other historical novelists discussed except perhaps Meredith. By his realism ~~convincing~~ only so far as it goes, for it must be remembered that Thackeray was ~~cramped~~ by Victorian and social conventions, by his concentration on ~~fictitious~~ characters and the introduction of historical figures in a rather incidental way ~~,~~ Thackeray achieved a satisfying blend of social-historical background and fictitious invention.

Dickens's significance as an historical novelist is somewhat diminished by his narrow knowledge of history. He was not interested in, or sympathetic with, the past as a whole, but he was fascinated by one or two sensational events. Beyond the information that he assimilated for the specific purpose of writing Barnaby Rudge and A Tale of Two Cities, Dickens had no great acquaintance with history and little historic sense, although he did write A Child's History of England. He had, however, an extraordinarily vivid imagination and a dramatic sense that enabled him to reconstruct graphically scenes of popular excitement.

This capacity for presenting events in a vivid, dramatic fashion is Dicken's principal virtue as an historical novelist, for his interest does not extend to historical personages, or to historical causes and externals. His chief contribution to the historical novel, in so far as he did make one, was his impressionistic method of describing the historical events. This method appears at its best in A Tale of Two Cities, for in Barnaby Rudge the course of the Gordon Riots is described more fully and less suggestively, while the historical and fictitious elements are not fused together as they are in A Tale of Two Cities. But in the latter work the historical events form an indispensable part of the story of the characters, and their experiences have historical value as they serve to illustrate the temper of the revolutionaries. Dickens makes no attempt to trace the course of the French Revolution in detail, but he tries to suggest the spirit of the time by symbolical methods. The Marquis symbolises the aristocrat of the old regime, Charles Darnay the aristocrat whose social conscience has been awakened, and Madame Defarge the suffering people, obsessed with a desire for revenge. The Marquis and Madame Defarge are inhuman characters, but their symbolical significance is more important than their individuality. None the less they are thoroughly Dickensian characters. Whereas Thackeray by a gradual assembling of details paints an elaborate picture of the social background, Dickens by swifter, more intuitive methods evokes the passions and hopes that form the temper of the time. Thackeray's work has a more solid, satisfying quality, but Dickens's is the more brilliantly dramatic.

Thackeray's leisurely reminiscential style is characteristically different from the rapid, dramatic, emotional style of Dickens.

Again, Dickens, unlike Thackeray, had turned to the historical novel not entirely because he was interested in the life and manners of a past society, but because he thought there was in the events he described a special significance for readers of his own day. Barnaby Rudge was intended to be an exposure of the evil effects of religious bigotry and of inhuman penal laws. Religious passions were not so inflamed and criminal law not so oppressive in Dickens's own day, but he aimed at warning readers against allowing a similar situation to develop. That is to say Dickens brought a didactic intention into historical fiction.

This didacticism is even more pronounced in the works of Kingsley, whose controversial bent led him to turn the historical novel to some extent into a polemical weapon. His anti-Catholic and patriotic bias naturally impairs the historical value of his novels, but not their value as fiction. It may not be legitimate to travesty history and to misrepresent historical characters as much as Kingsley has done, especially in Westward Ho! but since he deals with comparatively distant periods, and with some exceptions, like the Armada, introduces mostly fictitious incidents, his imagination may be permitted more scope.

Kingsley's historical novels cover a much wider range than those of Thackeray and Dickens which were confined to the previous century. This width of range and variety of setting recalls the practice of Lytton who selected his subjects from widely different epochs.

Again, like Lytton, Kingsley sometimes takes historical personages for his principal characters, as in Hypatia and Hereward the Wake. Kingsley's biographical method in Hereward the Wake, where he follows the information of the chronicles without much regard to plot construction, is a little like Lytton's, particularly in the manner in which Kingsley contrives to extract romance from chronicles that professed to be history. But this resemblance to Lytton, this desire to appear strictly faithful to the authorities is manifested most clearly in Kingsley's last historical novel, although he claimed in the two before to be following the facts of history. A greater degree of invention is discernible in Hypatia and Westward Ho!

The difference between Kingsley's three historical novels justify the belief that he was more of an experimenter in this form than Thackeray, whose method scarcely changes. Dickens, however, shows considerable advance in A Tale of Two Cities over Barnaby Rudge in the art of blending fictitious events with an historical background. Whether it was owing to Kingsley's restless mind or to the differences of their setting Hypatia, Westward Ho! and Hereward the Wake almost represent three distinct types of historical fiction. Hypatia belongs to the type in which philosophical and religious interests predominate. Religious issues are still important in Westward Ho! but it is more a story of adventure, illustrating at the same time the patriotism of Englishmen. Little attempt is made, as in Hypatia, to detail the principles and portray the exponents of the opposing religions. Religious questions occupy still less place in Hereward the Wake,

which certainly has an element of adventure, but which differs from Westward Ho! in having an historical personage for its hero and in following the authorities more closely. Hereward the Wake is more obviously an attempt to write history in terms of fiction than Westward Ho! Admittedly Kingsley's novels have in common a spirited style, a command of vigorous narrative perhaps superior to that shown by any of the historical novelists we have discussed, and a singular capacity for exact and colourful natural descriptions. But beneath these superficial resemblances lie fundamental differences which indicate that Kingsley was a bold experimenter with historical fiction and that he changed its design readily to suit the spirit of his period.

Kingsley's chief importance in the development of historical fiction lies in his introduction of philosophical and religious elements. Preceding novelists, though concentrating mainly on political, social and military affairs, and on manners, had taken more than a passing glance at religion. Scott had been attracted by the romantic appeal of Catholicism, and, according to Newman, had something to do with the genesis of the Oxford Movement. In Old Mortality (1816) and Woodstock (1896) he dealt with the Covenanters and the Puritans respectively. But, as Professor Elton point out, "his interest in the fray of creeds seems to have been chiefly dramatic. This, in the novels, is truculent in colouring; he stands outside it and imagines it by a kind of feat, as in the picture of the preachers in Old Mortality, with their differing styles of eloquence and unreason."[1]

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1. A survey of English Literature 1780-1830 i. 334

But in Hypatia Kingsley brought religion and philosophy right into the centre of the picture and disposed the incidents and characters to illustrate the relations of Christians and the adherents of non-Christian religions and philosophy in the fifth century. Scott declared his intention in Ivanhoe of illustrating the racial conflict between Anglo-Saxons and Normans. Kingsley developed the idea of conflict on an intellectual and spiritual plane. Thus he annexed a new province for historical fiction by directing attention to an activity of the past not fully exposed by previous novelists. George Eliot and Pater developed further this concern with philosophy and religion, but, though they may have excelled Kingsley in insight and subtlety of handling philosophical and moral questions, they lost much of his vitality and picturesqueness. For all his interest in philosophy and religion, Kingsley was plainly an extravert and was more able than they to combine brilliant descriptions of setting and sustained narrative with a study of the intellectual and spiritual problems of characters.

George Eliot followed Kingsley in trying to graft a cutting from the garden of philosophy on to the historical novel. She describes the setting in the customary manner, introducing topographical, political and social details, and mingling historical personages with fictitious characters, most of them representing recognised types that flourished in the particular period. She took immense pains to describe Florentine life with convincing accuracy, but her descriptions have not the plausibility of Kingsley's largely because she was inferior to him in

descriptive and narrative capacity. Apart from its lack of imaginative warmth Romola fails as an historical novel on account of its divided interest. George Eliot does not adhere to the normal practice of focussing interest on the fictitious characters and making the historical figures subsidiary to them and important because of their influence on them. Savonarola does influence Romola's life, but towards the end of the story he dwarfs the other characters and the necessity of showing his fate becomes the raison d'etre of the last few chapters. Romola might have been a better historical novel had George Eliot chosen to make him the central figure as Kingsley does with Hereward the Wake. Though Romola and Tito may quite conceivably represent Renaissance types, as their reactions do show some of the influences to which young and intelligent minds were then exposed, their relations and the moral conflicts they experience do not seem altogether determined by their environment. [George Eliot seems to us to have constructed an elaborate setting and then made the dominant theme the working out of moral problems which did not require such a background. The relations of Romola and Tito, the former's spiritual Odyssey and the latter's moral degeneration do not require an historical setting, though it is true that in Romola their experiences are determined in some degree by historical factors. Savonarola is not necessary for their story and in a novel built round his life Romola and Tito occupy too prominent a position. George Eliot's urge to inculcate moral lessons through the experiences of her fictitious characters diminishes both the historical and artistic value of the novel.]

In following Kingsley's example of putting the new wine of philosophy into the old bottle of historical fiction, George Eliot contributed little of significance to its pattern, beyond perhaps showing a greater degree of introversion than Kingsley had done and thus preparing the way for Pater. George Eliot was more of an extravert than an intravert but all the same her concern with moral problems led her to enter more deeply and at greater length into the motives, promptings and urges of her principal characters than Scott, Thackeray, Dickens or Kingsley had done. Not that she analyses character with any great psychological subtlety, but she directs attention to their inward life.

With Meredith we come to a novelist whose single excursion into historical fiction produced a work markedly different from those of Kingsley, George Eliot, And Pater, but less so from those of Dickens and Thackeray. Kingsley, George Eliot and Pater placed their periods many centuries earlier than their own day, whereas Meredith, like Thackeray in Vanity Fair and Dickens in both his historical novels described events which had occurred less than half a century before the time of writing. The motive of Kingsley, George Eliot and Pater in turning to historical fiction was also different from Meredith's. They selected periods which seemed in some aspects to have a resemblance to the life of their own time, which either pointed a moral or presented somewhat similar intellectual and spiritual conflicts to those experienced by thinking men in the middle of the nineteenth century. They were drawn to particular periods by their sympathies or prejudices. But in Meredith the impulse to write an historical novel was different. He was drawn by

his enthusiasm for the cause of Italian liberation to make it the subject of a novel. To some extent also he had a didactic purpose, namely to stir his fellow-countrymen from their mental lethargy by showing them the picture of a nation influenced with generous and self-denying aspirations. But this purpose more resembles in spirit the intention of Dickens in Barnaby Rudge to arouse his readers to the oppressive effects of iniquitous criminal laws than it does the moral and religious aims of Kingsley and George Eliot. Yet Meredith does show something of the enthusiasm of Kingsley towards his subject.

Though Vittoria has some resemblance to Vanity Fair, Barnaby Rudge and A Tale of Two Cities in comparative proximity to the events described, it seems to stand apart from the other historical novels we have considered. Meredith's elaboration of style, his lack of narrative capacity, his failure to achieve a synthesis of the historical and the fictitious, and his concentration on incidents make Vittoria an historical novel of a unique kind, though it has never been rated very high by critics.

When we come to Pater, we find in him some resemblance to Kingsley and George Eliot in introducing philosophy and religion into historical fiction. In fact, the philosophical and religious element which occupied a considerable part of Hypatia and Romola, but which in these two novels had been conjoined with the ordinary characteristics of the historical novel came in Pater's works to engross practically the whole of the reader's attention. Nevertheless it can hardly be argued that Pater was deliberately following the practice of Kingsley and George Eliot, rejecting what seemed to him superfluous in their methods and concentrating on the

essentials. His practice in essay-writing no doubt suggested to him the most congenial way of writing historical fiction. In his Essays Pater had adopted a semi-biographical form of treatment and he adapted this method on a larger scale for his historical novels. Pater does describe his setting in an exquisitely summarised and suggestive manner, but the historical atmosphere is not evoked by it or by his historical characters so much as by his precise method of detailing the philosophies of the period.

Pater omits so much of what one is accustomed to find in the historical novel, such as social and political affairs and descriptions of the appearance and actions of historical personages, that one is inclined to question the legitimacy of including his novels in the category of historical fiction at all. But they are historical in so far as they represent situations in the history of thought, and in so far as the intellectual and spiritual experiences they describe could have been experienced by the characters only at those particular historical periods. Pater's historical novels may not be intrinsically superior to those of Thackeray, Dickens, Kingsley and George Eliot, and indeed they lack some of the virtues essential to fiction, but they strike one as being more mature, as showing historical fiction at a more sophisticated stage of its development. Marius and Gaston do not rely on exciting events, the glamour of historical figures, or intimate glimpses of everyday life to produce interest; their appeal is more austere and rarefied, to those who can appreciate the intellectual endeavours of the past as well as its more colourful aspects.

Other novelists had dramatised the past, viewed it in the tender light of memory, or shown how religious forces excite passions and prejudices in the minds of men and inspired them to action, but Pater sets out to recapture elusive phases of thought which can only be accomplished by a fastidious critical taste and psychological insight. Whatever their merits as fiction, Pater's novels, at least, reveal the catholicity of historical fiction and its adaptibility to the writer's needs.

A survey of the course of historical fiction from Thackeray to Pater leads one to the conclusion that it underwent a period of disintegration or experimentation according as one chooses to look at it. [Possibly owing to the fact that all of the novelists, except Pater (and he was an experienced essayist) had cultivated other forms of fiction before they attempted the historical novel, they were not unduly circumscribed by precedent]. Without any elaborate statement of their methods, ~~they~~ the novelists of this period quietly introduced an individual note into historical fiction, accepting or rejecting pre-existing patterns as it suited their purpose. They added considerably in their different ways to the range of content and method in the historical novel, and left this variety of fiction in a sufficiently flexible state for succeeding writers.

APPENDIX A.

SOURCES OF BARRY LYNDON: SPECIMEN.

No attempt has been made to examine in detail the sources, historical and literary, of all the novels examined in the thesis. But a detailed study of the sources of the first novel, Barry Lyndon, is given below as a specimen and a list of the obvious or possible sources of the other novels with a few comments is given in Appendix B.

I.

The most obvious parallel to or prototype of Barry Lyndon is Fielding's Jonathan Wild which is also the account of the adventures of a scoundrel. No doubt Thackeray's decision to make a disreputable character the hero in Barry Lyndon instead of the conventionally honourable man was suggested by Jonathan Wild, but in the actual details the resemblance is not so close as in the general idea.

Jonathan Wild is more an ironic commentary on the customary identification of goodness with greatness, qualities which Fielding's endeavours ironically to show may be found in disjunction, particularly in Jonathan who had all the greatness which "consists in bringing all manner of mischief on mankind,"[1] without a single impulse towards good. Thackeray in Barry Lyndon does make ironic remarks on conventional moral standards and a topsy-turvy morality is demonstrated in the activities of Barry, who himself tells the story and never doubts that he is quite respectable and a gentleman; but the ironic tone is not so all-pervasive and sustained as in Jonathan Wild. The latter is definitely meant to illustrate a thesis whereas Barry Lyndon has a less specific intention and besides furnishing a self-portrait of a rogue has an historical aspect in its reconstruction of certain sections of eighteenth-century society. Fielding makes little attempt to describe the society of Jonathan's time (which was slightly

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1. Jonathan Wild (ed. by Saintsbury 1890) p.3.

antecedent to the time of writing) except in the narrow circle of thieves and card-sharpers amongst whom the hero moved. Jonathan Wild is meant to be a picture of a consummate rogue, whereas Barry does not quite approach the same pitch of "greatness". He resembles in some ways the heroes of the picaresque romances such as Gil Blas, who were occasionally generous when it suited themselves.

The autobiographic form of Thackeray's work also differentiates it from that of Fielding's. In spite of the occasional moralising or reflective interpolations which are not in character and in which he imitates Fielding, Thackeray in general suppresses himself and presents the narrative from the point of view of the complacent Barry. Some of the interpolations he does make are given in footnotes. This tone was no doubt caught from The Life and Adventures of James Freney written by Himself. Freney's self-satisfaction resembles that of Barry. Accordingly though Fielding was the eighteenth century novelist nearest to Thackeray, though there is a strong general resemblance between Barry Lyndon and Jonathan Wild, and though the former would probably never have been conceived in its present form but for the model provided by the latter, there is not much correspondence in incidents and characters. But there are a few features in Barry Lyndon, such as the mock genealogy of the hero and the brevity of his school-days, which may be imitated from the corresponding pages in Jonathan Wild.

II.

Beyond belonging to the same type of novel, namely that which chronicles the changing fortunes of an adventurer, there

is not a great deal of resemblance between Ferdinand, Count Fathom and Barry Lyndon, although Smollett's novel may be included in the list of general sources of the latter work. Certainly the milieu is rather different in spite of the fact that both novelists take their heroes abroad, for Ferdinand is more of an adventurer of low life than Barry and his exploits consist more of a succession of seductions, although Barry's proficiency in this art is hinted at, than in the gambling enterprises of Thackeray's hero, even if he does attempt on a few occasions to make his fortune by means of play. Again in Ferdinand, Count Fathom the form is not autobiographical and there is no artistic use of irony. Smollett, anxious to show that he is on the side of morality, presents his hero as a reprehensible person and gives him no opportunity of revealing himself directly. Thackeray may have had a moral purpose in view, but he does not underline it so heavily as Smollett does in the Prefactory Address: "....my purpose is to set him up as a beacon for the benefit of the unexperienced and unwary, who, from the perusal of these memoirs, may learn to avoid the manifold snares with which they continually surrounded in the paths of life; while those wo hesitate on the brink of iniquity may be terrified from plunging into that irremediable gulf, by surveying the deplorable fate of Ferdinand, Count Fathom."[1] Thackeray is wise enough not to perpetuate Smollett's well-meant, but inartistic, device of raising "up a virtuous character, in opposition to the adventurer."[2] Fortunately Barry does not end his career with such an improbable reformation and transformation as that which concludes Ferdinand's. However, the History of the noble Castilian which is embodied in Ferdinand, Count Fathom is

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1. Ferdinand, Count Fathom prefatory Address. p. 4 (Ed. by Saintsbury) p.4.
2. Ibid.

of the same romantic type as that of the unfortunate Princess Olivia in Barry Lyndon, although the details do not show any correspondence. Thackeray also may have had Smollett's description of the society of Bath, a very fashionable watering-place in the eighteenth century in mind, when he narrates Barry's experiences in that town. But on the whole it is not possible to trace any close resemblances between Ferdinand, Count Fathom and Barry Lyndon in form, or incidents or characters.

In Roderick Random Smollett does not trace the career of a villain as he does in Ferdinand, Count Fathom. Yet, though Roderick Random has not much resemblance to Barry Lyndon in disposition, he undergoes some experiences so similar that one is justified in believing that on these occasions Thackeray caught a hint from Smollett. Barry finishes his school career by hurling a slate at the schoolmaster's head,[1] and Roderick leaves school after giving the schoolmaster a sound thrashing.[2] There is also some resemblanee in the relations of the two heroes with their female cousins. Roderick's cousins in Edinburgh treat him with a show of condescension and taunt him with his poverty.[3] Barry's cousin, Nora, owing to her superiority in years treats him condescendingly and compares his boyishness and poverty with the manly attractions and wealth of her English admirer, Captain Quin.

But these resemblances are of minor importance compared with the parallel that appears between the experiences of Roderick and Barry in the Seven Years' War. True, the military career of Roderick occupies less space than that of Barry's, and they fight on different sides, Barry first with the English and later with

1. Barry Lyndon p. 16.
2. Roderick Random.(Edited by Saintsbury. 3 Vols.) Vol. i. chap. V.
3. Ibid. chap. VI.

the Prussians, and Roderick with the French; but both found the conditions of services similar. Thackeray describes the wretched condition of the soldiery, their brutality, their sufferings under iron discipline, and their semi-starved appearance[1] It is almost certain that he used Smollett's description of the lot of the French soldiers as his source, especially such passages as the following:- "It is impossible to describe the hunger and thirst I sustained, and the fatigue I underwent, in a march of so many hundred miles; during which I was ~~so much was~~ so much chafed with the heat and motion of my limbs, that in very short time the inside of my thigh and legs was deprived of skin, and I proceeded in the utmost torture. This misfortune I owed to the plumpness of my constitution, which I cursed, and envied the withered condition of my comrades, whose bodies could not spare juice enough to supply a common issue, and were indeed proof against all manner of friction. The continual pain I felt made me fretful, and my peevishness was increased by the mortification of my pride in seeing those miserable wretches, whom a hard gale of wind would have scattered through the air like chaff, bear those toils with alacrity, under which I was ready to sink."[2]

Both Barry and Roderick reflect on the folly of princes waging war for petty ends, thus causing the common people indescribable suffering. In an argument with a French soldier Roderick inveighs against the viciousness of War. "When I looked upon the contemptible object that pronounced these words, I was

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1. See Barry Lyndon chap. VII.
2. Roderick Random Vol. ii. p. 174.

amazed at the infatuation that possessed him; and could not help expressing my astonishment at the absurdity of a rational being, who thinks himself highly honoured in being permitted to encounter abject poverty, oppression, famine, disease, mutilation, and evident death, merely to gratify the vivious ambition of a prince, by whom his sufferings were disregarded, and his name utterly unknown."[1] Thackeray makes Barry write in something of the same tone. "It is well for gentlemen to talk of the age of chivalry; but remember the starving brutes whom they lead - men nurshed in poverty, entirely ignorant, made to take a pride in deeds of blood - men who can have no amusement but in drunkenness, debauch, and plunder. It is with these shocking instruments that your great warriors and kings have been doing their murderous work in the world; and while, for instance we are at the present moment admiring the "Great Fredick," as we call him, and his philosophy, and his liberality, and his military genius, I, who have served him, and been, as it were, behind the scenes of which that great spectacle is composed, can only look at it with horror. What a number of items of human crime, misery, slavery, go to form that sum-total of glory!"[2]

In their account of the battles in which their heroes fought Smollett and Thackeray use the same method. That is, neither of them attempts to give a detailed military description. Smollett describes Dettingen in which Roderick Random fought in a brief and casual manner, while Thackeray describes no more of Minden in which Barry fought than a common soldier might reasonably be supposed to have observed. The military career of Thackeray's hero is longer than that of Smollett's, but it is evident that Thackeray made

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1. Roderick Random ii, 175.
2. Barry Lyndon p. 76.

considerable use of Chapters XLIII and XLIV of Roderick Random for Chapters IV-VII of Barry Lyndon.

III.

There are traces in Barry Lyndon of the influence of some writers earlier than Fielding and Smollett, especially of Le Sage and Defoe. True, the resemblances between Barry Lyndon and Gil Blas are too scattered and unimportant to suggest that Thackeray was deliberately using it as a model, in the same way as Smollett was in Roderick Random, but they indicate that, consciously or unconsciously, he embodied in Barry Lyndon some details that remained in his memory from his reading of Gil Blas. For instance, Gil Blas sets out to Salamanca, self-confident and inexperienced, and falls a prey to a flatterer,[1] as easily as Barry does to the blandishments of Mrs. Fitzsimmons on his way to Dublin. When Gil Blas achieves success at Court he becomes strangely forgetful of his family,[2] just as Barry after his return in prosperity to Dublin puts off visiting his mother as long as possible, excusing himself on the pretext of being too busy.[3] Barry's rather scornful attitude to men of letters, such as Dr. Johnson, is somewhat similar to the satirical, common-sense view of a company of authors, expressed by Gil Blas in the following passage :- "My poets began talking of their poems and themselves. One fellow, with the most lyrical assurance, numbered up whole hosts of first-rate nobility and high flying dames, who were quite enraptured with his muse. Another, though it was not for him to arraign the choice which

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1. See Gil Blas (London: 1881 edition) Vol. i. chap. II.
2. Ibid. Vol. iii. pp. 52-54.
3. See Barry Lyndon pp. 234-236 .

should not have elected him. All the rest were much in the same story. Admid the clatter of knives and forks, my ears were more discordantly dinned with verses and harangues."[4]

Apart from correspondence in a few details, there is a slight resemblance between Gil Blas and Barry Lyndon in the persons of their heroes. Both are adventurers, self-seeking rascals who live by their wits, and they are equally self-satisfied and conceited, but Gil Blas is more good-natured and less callous than Barry, although he has also a strain of greed and covetousness in his nature which Barry does not display.

Barry Lyndon is too far apart from Defoe's stories of pirates, pickpockets and thieves, for Thackeray to have borrowed much from them. But he knew Defoe well and probably was influenced by his narrative method, although he did not derive any suggestions for particular details from his stories. Thackeray does not try to achieve the same bald realism as Defoe does, but Barry's occasional protestations that he is telling a true story reminds one of Defoe's habit of insisting on the veracity of his tales. Again Defoe was fond of the autobiographical method, which Thackeray uses in Barry Lyndon, but this method was not necessarily derived from Defoe, for it is used by Le Sage, Smollett and Lever as well.

IV.

Thackeray's journey through Ireland in 1842-43 made him familiar with Irish scenery, manners and customs, although there is no evidence in The Irish Sketch Book (1843) to suggest that he encountered on his tour any people who served as originals of the characters of Barry Lyndon, or received any direct hints for the incidents. But here and there one finds remarks on Irish society that recur in Barry Lyndon, such as observations on the wretchedly poor condition of the common people and the contrast of their poverty with the extravagance of fashionable people in London. The rigid division into Protestant and Catholics is mentioned in both books. There are "two truths, the Catholic truth and the Protestant truth," Thackeray writes in The Irish Sketch Book.[1] Barry observes that to one like himself who "had been bred so much abroad ... this difference between Catholic and Protestant was doubly striking."[2] In his courtship of Lady Lyndon, Barry takes advantage of the terrorist associations of Captain Thunder and parties like the "Whiteboys, Oakboys, Steelboys" to subscribe threatening letters with the name of that gentleman. Soon after he came to Dublin Thackeray relates in The Irish Sketch Book how he read the papers with their accounts of murders and deeds of violence.[3] Incidentally he remarks on this occasion that students a hundred years later who wish to inform themselves on the manners of his day and for that purpose refer to the files of the Times and Chronicle will consult not so much the "luminous

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1. Collier edition P. 393.
2. Barry Lyndon (Collier edition) P. 281.
3. See Irish Sketch Book PP. 13-18.

and philosophical leading articles,"[1] as "those parts of the journals into which information is squeezed into the smallest possible print, to the advertisements, namely, the law and police reports, and to the instructive narratives supplied by that ill-used body of men who transcribe knowledge at the rate of a penny a line."[2] This passage is very illuminating with regard to Thackeray's attitude to his newspaper sources.

In the course of his Irish tour Thackeray stayed with a family whose comfortable and clean house was something of a contrast with those of their neighbours, for "the windows are not variegated by paper."[3] When Barry arrives in Dublin after his fatal duel, he is not made suspicious by the contrast between the pretentious talk of the Fitzsimmons and the meanness of their lodgings for even at Castle Brady the furniture was in a ramshackle condition and all the windows were "broken and stuffed with rags."[4]

For his picture of Dublin society in Barry Lyndon Thackeray no doubt gained some hints from his experience in Ireland, although there are no striking parallels with The Irish Sketch Book in this respect. Barry attends a review in the Phoenix Park with Mrs. Fitzsimmons,[5] but the military spectacle is not

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1. See Irish Sketch Book P. 9.
2. Ibid,
3. Ibid, P. 33.
4. Barry Lyndon, P. 58.
5. Ibid, P. 59.

described as fully as it is in The Irish Sketch Book.[1]

Thackeray's interest in national types is manifested in The Irish Sketch Book and it may have been this interest that induced him to make an Irishman the hero of Barry Lyndon and include characters from other nationalities, and make two Americans the heroes of The Virginians. For instance, he dilates in The Irish Sketch Book on the different manners in which the Irish, English, French and Germans receive their guests.[2] From this passage it is clear that Thackeray at the time had rather conventional notions about foreigners. A meeting at Killarney with a self-confident young Scotsman prompts Thackeray to reflect that this "would be a good opportunity to enter into a dissertation upon national characteristics; to show that the bold swaggering Irishman is really a modest fellow, while the canny Scot is a most brazen one..."[3] This interest on Thackeray's part in national types is especially important in Barry Lyndon, which is the most cosmopolitan of his novels in setting and characterisation.

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1. "Of the numberless amusements that take place in Phaynix, it is not very necessary to speak. Here you may behold garrison races, and reviews; lord-lieutenants in brown greatcoats; aides-de-camp scampering about like mad in blue; fat colonels roaring 'charge' to immense heavy dragoons; dark riflemen lining woods and firing; galloping cannoneers banging and blazing right and left. Here comes his Excellency the Commander-in-chief, with his huge feathers, and white hair, and hooked nose; and yonder sits his Excellency, the Ambassador from the republic of Topinambo in a glass coach, smoking a cigar."- Irish Sketch Book, P.387.

2. See Irish Sketch Book, PP.35-36.

3. Ibid, P.125.

V.

When Thackeray was at Galway on his Irish trip, it rained heavily for two days! Shortly before, at Ennis, he had bought eighteen pennyworth of little popular books, which he now had time to read. These little yellow-covered books were "prepared for the people chiefly; and have been sold for many long years before the march of knowledge began to banish Fancy out of the world ..."[1] Among this collection was The Life and Adventures of James Freney Written by Himself. James Freney was also called Captain Freney, a thief, house-breaker and highwayman, who, after being the terror of the countryside for a number of years betrayed his companions and escaped hanging. This work Thackeray read with great gusto. He was particularly struck by the tone Freney adopted: "The best part of worthy Freney's tale is the noble naivete and simplicity of the hero as he recounts his own adventures, and the utter unconsciousness that he is narrating anything wonderful. It is the way of all great men, who recite their great actions modestly, and as if they were matters of course; as indeed to them they are. A common tyro, having perpetrated a great deed, would be amazed and flurried at his own action; whereas I make no doubt the Duke of Wellington, after a great victory, took his tea and went to bed just as quietly as he would after a dull debate in the House of Lords. And so with Freney, - his great and charming characteristic is grave simplicity: he does his work; he knows his danger as well as another; but he goes through his fearful duty quite quietly and easily, and not with the least air of bravado, or the smallest notion that he is doing anything

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1. Irish Sketch Book, P. 173.

uncommon."[1]

The Captain, in proper person, figures for a moment in Barry Lyndon. He meets young Barry as the latter is starting on his travels, and after duly warning the young man against highwaymen, presses on and gets a little plunder from Mrs. Fitzsimmons. But, as far as incidents are concerned, Freney's autobiography suggested little more to Thackeray than this passing reference. Freney and Barry were rogues of a different pattern and there is not much similarity in their exploits. Freney was a vulgar rascal, a common thief and highwayman, audacious and courageous, but with none of the would-be elegance, acumen and savoir faire shown by Barry. The latter never descends to highway robbery; he mingles with people of high social standing, and lives in a more sophisticated manner. An Irish highwayman and a fashionable adventurer naturally would not have many experiences in common. Yet the phrase, naivete and simplicity which Thackeray uses with reference to the autobiography of Freney is significant, for the same terms might be applied to the tone in which Barry relates his own shady experiences. Barry, like Freney, makes no attempt to hide his misdeeds, does not in fact see as a rule that they are misdeeds, but attributes whatever may seem questionable about them to adverse circumstances. In short, a similar spirit animates the autobiographies of Captain Freney and Barry Lyndon, and it is natural to trace the latter autobiography back, in germ, at least, to the inn at Galway, and the rainy day Thackeray whiled away in perusing the adventures of an Irish scoundrel.

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1. Irish Sketch Book PP. 174-5.

VI.

"Tiger" Roche, whose biography is printed in J. E. Walsh's Ireland Sixty Years Ago (1847) and whose life story is immensely popular in Ireland, has some traits in common with Barry Lyndon, for he was an arrogant bully, although he was possibly even more of a blackguard in his conduct. Roche, who was born in Dublin in 1728, was a well-educated and accomplished youth, but, when his relatives declined to allow him to accept a commission offered him by Lord Chesterfield, he abandoned himself to dissipation. Like Barry, he was obliged to fly from his native country, although his misdemeanour consisted in killing a watchman. Roche also enlisted in the Army as a common soldier, but he fought in North America, where the Seven Years' War was then in progress, instead of on the Continent. He was disgraced, after being convicted, unjustly as he alleged, of stealing an officer's fowling piece. On his return to England, "Roche now declared in all public places, and caused it to be everywhere known, that as he could not obtain justice on the miscreant who had traduced his character in America, he would personally chastise every man in England who presumed to propagate the report."[1] This truculent method is similar to that adopted by Barry in Dublin in order to warn off suitors from Lady Lyndon.

After Roche's honour was vindicated from this charge, he returned to Dublin, where he was feted as much as Barry, when he returned comparatively wealthy and well-known to the city he had quitted in obscurity. "He (Roche) soon returned to Dublin with considerable eclat - the reputation of the injuries he had

1. Ireland Sixty Years Ago (Dublin : 1847 edition) PP.123-4.

sustained, the gallant he had acted, and the romantic adventures he had encountered among the Indians, in the woods of America, were the subject of every conversation. Convivial parties were everywhere made for him. Wherever he appeared, he was the lion of the night. A handsome person, made still more attractive by the wounds he had received, a graceful form in the dance, in which he excelled, and the narrative of 'his hair-breadth 'scapes,' with which he was never too difficult to indulge the company, made him at this time 'the observed of all observers' in the metropolis of Ireland."[1] His person, it may be noted, was handsome like Barry's.

Like Barry, he made himself wealthy by marriage, though he was even more successful, robbing two ladies of their fortunes. "In order to repair it, (Roche's fortune) he paid his addresses to a Miss Pitt, who had a fortune of £4,000. On the anticipation of this, he engaged in a career of extravagance that soon accumulated debts to a greater amount, and the marriage portion was insufficient to satisfy his creditors. He was arrested and cast into the prison of the King's Bench, where various detainers were laid upon him, and he was doomed to a confinement of hopeless termination."[2]

Again, "He met with a young person, walking with her mother in St. James's Park, and was struck with her appearance. He insinuated himself into their acquaintance, and the young lady formed for him a strong and uncontrollable attachment. She possessed a considerable fortune, of which Roche became the

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1. Ireland Sixty Years Ago, P. 125.

2. Ibid, P. 126.

manager. His daily profusion and dissipation soon exhausted her property, and the mother and daughter were compelled to leave London, reduced to indigence and disgrace, in consequence of the debts in which he had involved them."[1] Although Barry's relations with Lady Lyndon are undoubtedly chiefly borrowed from Jesse Foot's account of Bowes's marriage with the Countess of Strathmore, these two quotations indicate that there is a curious parallel between the experiences of Roche and Barry.

Roche resembles Barry greatly in his sudden change of mood from courage to cowardice. When Barry lay in the Fleet Prison, a small man was always jeering at him and making fun of him, but when challenged to fight, Barry had not the courage. This episode is borrowed from the life of Tiger Roche, whose spirit broke down after he was committed to the Fleet. "Here his mind appears to have been completely broken down, and the intrepid and daring courage which had sustained him in so remarkable a manner through all the vicissitudes of his former life, seemed to be totally exhausted. He submitted to insults and indignities with patience, and seemed deprived not only of the capability to resent, but of the sensibility to feel them."[2] Once he had a dispute with a prisoner who kicked him, and struck him in the face. Roche only turned away and cried like a child. Yet no sooner was he out of prison than his courage returned and he readily faced the strongest opponent. He is a more picturesque bully than Barry, but it is obvious that he contributed to the making of Barry Lyndon.

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1. Ireland Sixty Years Ago. P. 126.
2. Ibid, P. 126.

VII.

Apart from the knowledge of the Irish people and their manners he acquired during his tour of that country Thackeray was obviously indebted to the novels of Maria Edgeworth, Charles Lever and Samuel Lover for a good deal of the local colour in the parts of Barry Lyndon which are set in Ireland. By the time Thackeray wrote Barry Lyndon Maria Edgeworth's Castle Rackrent (1800) and The Absentee (1812) were regarded as classics of Irish life. A comparison of Barry Lyndon with these two novels suggests that Thackeray made more use of Castle Rackrent than of The Absentee. Certainly the latter novel would be valuable as a source of information on Irish characteristics and manners,[1] but its theme, its social melieu and its characters are so different from those of Barry Lyndon that one can hardly discover any details which Thackeray plainly borrowed from it.

With Castle Rackrent the case is rather different. It is autobiographical in form, like Barry Lyndon, though it professes to be the memoirs of an old servant and not of the hero. It is less a novel than a description of the financial embarrasments, the encumbrance of debts, and mortgages which pressed heavily on the Rackrent family, and obliged one of its members, Sir Condy, to marry a lady with a fortune, whom he treated with little consideration, though not with the calculated cruelty of Barry. Sir Condy stood for Parliament and the description of his election with the attendant drunkenness and corruption[2] recalls Thackeray's account of Barry's electioneering experiences in Devon.

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1. See especially Sir James Brook's long speech on the condition of Dublin before and after the Union of 1800. The Absentee (Everyman's Library) P.P. 164-7.
2. See Castle Rackrent (Everyman's Library. Bound with The Absentee in one volume) P. 36

The Rackrent family with their dilapidated property are in much the same condition as Barry's uncle at Barryville al: :though the former stand somewhat higher up the social scale. But both families are reduced to impecuniousness through their extravagance, shiftlessness and careless good nature. Family life survives monetary difficulties, however, and the Rackrent retainer, who describes the vicissitudes of the family writes of them in the same flamboyant, boasting strain as Barry does of his family. "The family of the Rackrents is, I am proud to say, one of the most ancient in the kingdom. Everybody knows this is not the old family name, which was O'Shaughlin, related to the kings of Ireland....." [1.] Barry likewise boasts of the anti: :quity of his illustrious family and asserts that it is derived from the ancient kings of Ireland. In her management of Barry's Irish estate his mother earns his gratitude by her prudent and economical methods, [2] which are closely akin to those of the lady of Sir Murtagh Rackrent. [3.] However, particular resemblances between the novels of Maria Edgeworth and Barry Lyndon are comparatively few. It is in the less ponderable matter of "atmosphere" that Thackeray is indebted to the Irish woman novelist.

Thackeray dedicated his Irish Sketch Book to Lever and it is certain that he knew well Harry Lorrequer (1840) and Charles O'Malley (1841), especially since they were published just a few years before Barry Lyndon. Lever's colloquial manner and his relish for social life must have appealed greatly to Thackeray

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1. Castle Rackrent p. 4
2. See Barry Lyndon p. 227
3. See Castle Rackrent p. 7

whose tastes, temperament and style were somewhat similar. Lever strikes one as an embryonic Thackeray, who would have grown to the full measure of the latter's greatness, had he possessed more artistic restraint, less proneness to ramble and quiet humour instead of rollicking high spirits. Lever was almost as much addicted to moralising, often incongruous and platudinous, as Thackeray.[1] In the teeming copious descriptions Lever gives of Irish society and regimental life Thackeray is sure to have found many suggestive hints for Barry Lyndon. Charles O'Malley is the novel of Lever's that is demonstrably nearest to Barry Lyndon. Harry Lorrequer, which is mainly a description of the pleasures enjoyed by officers stationed in Ireland, has little similarity in detail to Barry Lyndon, although it conceiv: :ably provided Thackeray with plenty of information on Irish character and life in general.

The career of the hero of Charles O'Malley, has general features in common with that of Barry Lyndon. Both novels are professedly autobiographies and begin with the youth of the heroes. Charles O'Malley is an orphan, whose father, like Barry's, has died after a life of extravagance, leaving his son dependent on the charity of relations. Though Charles does not grow up to be a heartless villain, like Barry, he resembles him in his liking for pleasure and in his satisfaction with himself. Both are handsome young fellows accomplished in sports and de: :spising intellect and learning. Charles describes himself in the following terms: - "I rode boldly with fix-hounds; I was about the best shot within twenty miles of us; I could swim the Shannon at Holy Island; I drove four-in-hand better than the

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1. See especially Charles O'Malley at beginning of chap. XXI

coachman himself; and from finding a hare to hooking a salmon, my equal could not be found from Killaloe to Banagher..... When I add to this portraiture of my accomplishments that I was nearly six feet high, with more than a common share of activity and strength for my years, and no inconsiderable portion of good looks, I have finished my sketch, and stand before my reader."[1] The complacent tone discernible in this description recalls the very accents in which Barry habitually speaks of himself.

The debts, mortgages, bonds etc. which afflict Charles O'Malley's uncle are common enough among Barry's relations, and the "ruinous pile of incongruous masonry" which is called O'Malley Castle suggests a comparison with the home of Barry's uncle. A possible prototype of the latter appears in Mr Blake, the re: :lation whose vote Charles is sent to canvass for his uncle. Mr Blake is a hearty, genial, sport-loving man, of the same pattern as Barry's uncle. Besides he has a family of daughters whose admiration for the officers who visit the house is paralleled by that of Barry's female cousins for Captain Quin and his friends. Charles falls in love with Miss Dashwood, a friend of his cousins', as Barry does with his cousin, Nora. He has a rival in Captain Hammersley, as Barry has in Captain Quin. Charles performs prodigious feats of horse-jumping in the hunting-field to show his superiority to Captain Hammersley, just as Barry stung by Nora's praise of Captain Quin resolves to display his mettle by a desperate leap on horseback over a bridge. At a dinner-party in Mr Blake's house Charles disturbs the harmony of the gathering by his advocacy of his uncle's political views and ends by stunning

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1. Charles O'Malley (London:1872) i.10.

a Mr Bodkin with a wine glass. Barry, although for different motives, insults Captain Quin at his uncle's table. In both cases the result is a duel. The issue of Charles's duel, however, is more serious than that of the mock encounter in which Barry was engaged. Thereafter the paths of the heroes follow different routes. Barry takes flight, serves as a common soldier abroad and afterwards becomes an adventurer. Charles O'Malley resides at Trinity College, takes his commission in due course and serves in the Peninsular War and in the Waterloo campaign.

Thackeray's view of Ireland must have been coloured by the novels of Samuel Lover, although traces of his influence are not so directly evident as that of Lever. Lover has not quite as much dash and gusto as Lever, but his merriment and his animated representation of Irish life is sure to have appealed to Thackeray. In fact the atmosphere of Handy Andy (1837) and Rory O'More (1840) strikes one as being more authentically Irish than Harry Lorrequer and Charles O'Malley, especially in the dialogue which is much more abundant, racy and natural. However, Lever's novels are closer to Barry Lyndon in form than Lover's for the latter does not employ the autobiographical method. His heroes are lower in the social scale, simpler and more honest than Barry and there is not much resemblance in the other characters. But Thackeray is certain to have derived some hints from Lover's descriptions of the drinking, gambling and duelling in which Irish

squires indulged. Maria Edgeworth and Lever provided him with sufficient examples of financially embarrassed Irish households, but doubtless he had in mind also Lover's celebrated description of Neck-or-Nothing Hall and its inmates in Handy Andy. And the terrorist activities of secret associations, like the Whiteboys, of which Barry takes advantage when he sends threatening anonymous letters to Lord George Poynings, are fully described in Rory O' More (which is a semi-historical novel on the Rebellion of 1798). Thackeray, of course, might easily have gained the information from other sources or heard of the secret societies during his own visit to Ireland, but we may fairly infer that he was acquainted with Lover's novels and drew his knowledge of Irish character and manners in some measure from them.

VIII.

Casanova's Memoires were an obvious source for a writer who proposed to write the life-story of an adventurer in the second part of the eighteenth century, This was the period during which Casanova wandered from one European capital to another, remaining as long as the Minister of Police allowed him, and supporting himself by the proceeds of gambling and imposing upon wealthy gulls. Yet, though Barry's career while he ran a faro-bank in association with his uncle the Chevalier de Balibari, has clearly a general resemblance to Casanova's way of life, it is difficult to find any close resem: :blance in detail between Barry Lyndon and the Memoirs, in spite of

Thackeray's reference to Casanova on two occasions.[1] The incidents of Barry's gambling career are not particularised. It is described after all very briefly and in general terms. The same is true of his relations with women. Barry hints that he has had numerous conquests, but none of them is detailed. Whereas Casanova's Memoirs are largely occupied with an interminable succession of love affairs. Casanova may have been one of the models that sat for the portrait of Barry, but the latter is by no means merely a copy. Casanova is egoistic and complacent, like Barry, but his character is more complex and his moods are more varied. He has more power of self-analysis and his tempera: :ment is more volatile. Now he is happy and prosperous, and now he is utterly cast down by failure at play or separation from the lady with whom he is in love for the time being. Casanova is selfish and self-indulgent enough, but he is not so callous as Barry. He likes to pose at times as the chivalrous defender of the weak or unfortunate and there is no doubt that he could respond to cases of genuine distress. But the greatest difference is in their intellectual attainments. Casanova is a man of culture, a writer and a soldier,whereas Barry is an ignoramus by comparison, scornful of men of letters who cut a mean figure in society.

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1. "I have known the Chevalier de Casanova, for instance, to travel six hundred miles, from Paris to Turin, for the purpose of meeting Mr Charles Fox, then only my Lord Holland's dashing son, afterwards the greatest of European orators and statesmen." - Barry Lyndon P. 130. "When Seingalt engaged a man for six-and-~~thirty hours~~ without leaving the table, do you think he showed no courage? - Barry Lyndon P. 143.

Casanova can attempt to justify his libertinism by making the gratification of the senses a kind of philosophy. Whereas Barry pursues his evil ways out of mere sensualism. He is naive and brutal in comparison with the sophisticated and intellectual Italian.

It is possible, however, to suggest some details in which Thackeray may have been indebted to the example of Casanova. Barry assumes the title of Captain, although he has no more right to it than Casanova had to call himself the Chevalier de Seingalt. And the designation of Chevalier de Balibari, assumed by Barry's uncle, is even more likely to have been suggested by Casanova's title. Indeed Casanova constantly makes professions of religious faith, like the Chevalier de Balibari, apparently unaware of the incongruity of such professions with a career of cheating and licentiousness. The Chevalier de Balibari, however, is less ardent in temperament and less amorous than Casanova. For Barry's genealogy Thackeray may have caught a hint from the elaborate family-tree with which Casanova begins his story, although he had no claim to it. This genealogy may equally well have been taken from Jonathan Wild. Casanova visited Berlin on one occasion and was received by Frederick the Great. His account of the interview shows that Frederick could be easily approached by foreigners, as we see from his dealings with Barry and his uncle.

To their accomplishments as gamblers and duellists Barry and Casanova both added some experience in espionage. Barry was employed to wait at the tables of strangers in Berlin and bring the Police Minister news of their conversation. Casanova towards the end of his life made secret reports to the inquisitorial tribunal in Venice regarding the corruption of public morality.

Other possible parallels between Casanova's Memoirs and Barry Lyndon consist of similarities of tone or senti: :ment. "For if the trust must be told," says Barry, " I made a very deep love to her (Lischen in Warburg) during my stay under her roof; as is always my way with women of whatever age or degree or beauty."[1] This passage seems an echo of the complacent observations of Casanova on his habitual gallantry, although Casanova never professes to have so promiscuous a taste. Again when Casanova writes: "I entreat you, dear reader, not to get weary of following me in my ramblings; for now that I am but the shadow of the once brilliant Casanova, I love to chatter,"[2] one is reminded of Thackeray's habit of address: :ing the reader directly.

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1. Barry Lyndon P. 77.
2. Casanova's Memoirs (London, 1903,Edition) i.317.

IX.

Thackeray's debt to The Lives of Andrew Robinson Bowes, Esq., and the Countess of Strathmore written from Thirty-three Years' Professional Attendance, from Letters and other well-authenticated Documents by Jesse Foot, is much greater than to the Memoirs of Casanova; here there is much beyond a general resemblance of the leading personages. In this instance one finds considerable similarities of incidents. Bowes, like Barry, was an adventurer and profligate, who determined to make his fortune by marrying a wealthy widow. But unlike Barry, he had been married previously to an heiress, a Miss Newton, who had brought him a fortune of some £30,000. He had ill-treated his first wife, and spent her fortune. Before Bowes begins his courtship of the Countess of Strathmore, the Earl has died, whereas Barry knew Sir Charles Lyndon and laid his schemes before the latter's death. Lady Lyndon and the Countess of Strathmore have considerable resemblances in appearance and character. Neither of them regretted the death of their first husband and in fact encouraged suitors with unseemly haste. Both of them have pretensions to learning; they are surrounded by parasitical men of letters and scholars whom they patronised, and they themselves compose verses. "The Countess of Strathmore had learning, knew a great many languages ..."[1] Lady Lyndon "was a goddaughter of old Mary Wortley Montagu, and ... made considerable pretensions to be a blue-stocking and a bel esprit."[2] In appearance, Lady Lyndon,

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1. Foot's Lives of Andrew Robinson Bowes, etc., (1810 edition), p. 12.
2. Barry Lyndon, p.190.

like the Countess, was "very well; but no more."[1] The Countess "possessed a very pleasing embonpoint,"[2] and was "near-sighted."[3] While Barry remarks at one point that Lady Lyndon had"grown very fat, was short-sighted..."[4]

The courtships of Bowes and Barry do not correspond entirely in details, although the general resemblance is strong. In each case there was a rival suitor. A Mr. Gray, a rich Indian nabob, seemed on the point of marrying the Countess of Strathmore. Bowes contrived to make him odious by hinting that the Countess's relatives, whom she detested (the aversion of the Tiptoffs to Barry also helped him to win Lady Lyndon's favour.[5]) were anxious for her to marry Gray. Lord George Poynings, a cousin of Lady Lyndon's, appeared to be the favoured suitor, until Barry defeated him in a duel and disillusioned him by showing him Lady Lyndon's letters. The duel in which Bowes figures was fought for a different reason. He challenged the editor of the Morning Post, who had cast aspersions on the Countess, and wounded him in a duel. This chivalrous act completely won her heart. "She blessed even the sword that was used by Bowes in the duel, took it home with her, and slept with it constantly at the head of her bed all the while she was in Grosvenor Square."[6] Immediately after the duel Bowes and the Countess were married. Bowes had been obliged to secure

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1. Barry Lyndon, p. 194.
2. Foot's Lives,etc., p.27.
3. Ibid.
4. Barry Lyndon, p. 252.
5. Ibid, p. 242.
6. Foot's Lives, etc., p. 28.

the interest of the Countess's attendants, - Miss Eliza Planta, her maid, and the Rev. Mr. Stephens her chaplain - in the same way as Barry won the assistance of Lady Lyndon's maid and the Chaplain, Mr. Runt; he had resorted to the same device of bribing a fortune-teller; he had also made use of the newspapers to further his campaign; but his task was not so long and so difficult as Barry's. Bowes's chief difficulty was to gain the entrée to the Countess's house. She did not regard him with the same aversion as Lady Lyndon did her persistent suitor. Bowes did not need to dog the very footsteps of the Countess, to bully her, persecute her, and terrify her into yielding. In the use they made of letters there is a noticeable difference. Barry was able to threaten to expose Lady Lyndon by letters she had previously written him; Bowes had letters addressed to the Countess purporting to be from a lady who loved him and whom he has deserted. Again there is nothing in Foot's narrative corresponding to Barry's kidnapping of Miss Kiljoy for the benefit of his cousin, Ulick.

After their marriage, Barry and Bowes follow similar courses, though here the experiences of the latter are detailed at greater length. Both squandered their wives' fortunes by their ostentatious manner of living and their indulgence in pleasures. They raised money by the same devices, by borrowing, by cutting down timber, and by means of insurance policies for their wives. Thackeray says that Barry's papers consisted of "drafts of letters to lawyers and money-brokers relative to the raising of money, the insuring of Lady Lyndon's life ..."[1] A large amount of Foot's biography is

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1. Barry Lyndon, p. 248.

occupied with Bowes's letters on similar subjects. Bowes and Barry treated their wives in the same heartless fashion, coaxing them when it suited them, neglecting them at other times for the company of other women. Covert hints are given about Barry's infidelities, and Bowes was a gross sensualist. Both of them had political ambitions. Bowes was elected Member for Newcastle by the following methods: "he entertained the heads of that town at Gilside; he kept an open house; his dinners were good, and his table enriched by massive plate."[1] Barry was returned for Tippleton after entertaining the Mayor and Corporation lavishly.[2] Bowes "aimed at an Irish peerage,"[3] and Barry's ambition for a similar dignity was also frustrated. Yet Bowes allowed the Countess's estates to go to ruin; whereas Barry spent money extravagantly on improvements.

Their extravagance and dissipation bring financial ruin to Bowes and Barry, and they are ultimately consigned to prison, although Bowes lived in prison in a more luxurious state than Barry. Thackeray does not attempt to follow the rather involved final chapter in Bowes's relations with his wife. She was kept virtually a captive, but eight years after their marriage she eloped, remained free for a time, was kidnapped by Bowes, and was, finally, rescued after considerable suffering. Then followed complicated lawsuits. Lady Lyndon tried once to escape from Barry, but her liberation is effected by his arrest for debt. Bowes's life in prison is described much more fully than that of Barry in the same surroundings. There is no touch of humanity in

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1. Foot's Lives, etc., p.81.
2. Barry Lyndon, p.261.
3. Foot's Lives, etc., p.80.

the portrait of Bowes, such as is manifested in Barry's affection for his son, Brian. This episode is not borrowed from Foot's account. Neither is Barry's relations with Viscount Bullingdon. A son's hatred for his unworthy step-father is a common theme, and an original, if any is necessary, may be found in Hamlet. Bowes kidnapped two of the Countess's daughters by her first marriage, but there is nothing corresponding to this incident in Barry Lyndon. Thackeray introduced a considerable number of modifications into Foots' narrative, but it is clear that he borrowed largely from it in the details of Barry's courtship and marriage with a wealthy widow and his dissipation of her fortune.

X.

Marzials says[1] that he tried to discover whether there was any counterpart in history to the story of the Princess Olivia, but failed to discover any unmistakeable source. But, according to Lady Ritchie,[2] Thackeray took the episode of Duke Victor and Princess Olivia from a book entitled, L'Empire, ou dix ans sous Napoléon,[3] par un chambellan. In this book a story is included of the first King of Württemberg, who killed his wife for committing adultery.

Perhaps Thackeray, in writing this portion of Barry Lyndon's memoir may have had no closer precedent than the miserable story of the Princess Sophia Dorothea, wife of the Electoral Prince George of Hanover - afterwards George I - and Philip of Königsmarck.

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1. In his introduction to an edition (Walter Scott) of Barry Lyndon.
2. See Works with Biographical Introduction, xxxi.
3. This book is, as Melville in his Life of Thackeray says, "now little known." (i.216.)

Duke Victor, the husband of Princess Olivia, was heir-presumptive like Prince George, and in disposition they were alike. The former was "of a stern character, seldom appeared at Court, except when ceremony called him, but lived almost alone in his wing of the palace, where he devoted himself to the severest studies, being a great astronomer and chemist."[1] If Prince George did not exactly share the pursuits of Duke Victor, he was as cold and reserved in temper.[2] Both of the reigning Dukes, unlike their sons, were devotees of pleasure. Duke Ernest of Hanover was a "jolly prince, shrewd, selfish, scheming, loving his cups and his ease."[3] The Duke of X was "fonder of pleasure than of politics, and loved to talk a good deal more with his grand huntsman, or the director of his opera, than with ministers and ambassadors."[4] Princess Olivia and Sophia Dorothea were both beautiful, lively and intelligent women, but imprudent, capricious and extravagant. Both of them fell in love with worthless fellows, Princess Olivia with a vain, young Frenchman, the Cheavalier de Magny, and Sophia Dorothea with Philip of Königsmarch, "than whom a greater scamp does not walk the history of the seventeenth century."[5]

But there is not the same similarity in the incidents of the two stories and in the dispositions of the central figures. Princess Olivia's story is elaborated by Barry's designs on the hand of the rich heiress, Countess Ida. Yet both ladies are ruined by persons whom their wit has offended. Princess Olivia's intrigue

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1. Barry Lyndon, p. 152.
2. "a cold, selfish libertine" -see The Four Georges (Collier edition) p.287.
3. Ibid, p.289.
4. Barry Lyndon, p. 153.
5. The Four Georges, p.288.

is revealed by Monsieur de Geldern, the Police Minister, whom she offended mortally by causing "pork to be removed before him at table."[1] Thus reminding him of his Jewish origin. Sophia Dorothea's elopement is prevented by the disclosure of her enemy, the Countess Platern, whom she offended by her witticisms. Both of the lovers come to tragic ends. De Magny is obliged to drink poison and Philip of Königsmarck is cut down by guards, while he is trying to escape. But the death of Princess Olivia is more melodramatic than Sophia Dorothea's. She is executed by a masked man, whereas Sophia is consigned to the castle of Ahlden, where she remained a prisoner for no less than thirty-two years.[2] Though the similarities between the two stories are not very close as far as incidents are concerned, it appears that the history of Princess Sophia Dorothea formed the basis of the story of the Princess Olivia, which was amplified to admit of Barry's playing a part in it.

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1. Barry Lyndon, p. 179.
2. The Four Georges, p. 290.

APPENDIX B

SOURCES OF OTHER NOVELS

I. THACKERAY

Partly owing to the fact that the period of Vanity Fair does not fall outside his own lifetime and partly because few direct allusions are made to historical events, Thackeray had to read less than for the novels with an eighteenth-century background. Most of his information about the events of the day might have been derived from the files of newspapers, or from the Annual Register, and the general social background of the Regency from the letter-writers, memoirists, and social literature of the time. It is not unlikely that he had more particularly in mind Lever's Charles O'Malley (1841), which, like Vanity Fair, describes Brussels, the Duchess of Richmond's Ball, Quatre Bras, and Waterloo.[1]

Esmond no doubt was suggested by the studies which Thackeray had made in preparing his Lectures on the English Humourists (1853). For these lectures he read extensively (although he knew his eighteenth century pretty well before) in the works of the great writers of the period. Most of the literature of the Queen Anne period throws some light on the social background, but more intimate glimpses of the activities of men of that time might be gained from letters and memoirs, including Swift's Journal to Stella, his general correspondence, and his History of the last four years of Queen Anne (1758); the letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1787); Steele's letters (1763-7); Bolingbroke's Letters, Public and Private (1798); Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough's Private Correspondence (1838), and Sir Robert Walpole's Memoirs with Correspondence (1798). For

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1. See Charles O'Malley Chap. XXI - XXVI

the historical portions[1] Thackeray may possibly have used Coxe's Memoirs and Correspondence of Marlborough (1818-9); Sir Archibald Alison's Military Life of the Duke of Marlborough (1843), and the early volumes of Macaulay's History of England with its vivid and picturesque "Third Chapter" which had appeared in 1848.

As The Virginians covers practically the same period as Barry Lyndon, Thackeray could utilise the same sources for the English social background. For information on American society and political affairs he may quite likely have consulted Marshall's Life of Washington (1804-7) and Irving's Life of Washington(1855-9), although Irving's work was being published during the time he was actually writing The Virginians. There is an extensive literature on the American War,[2] on which he might also have drawn.

The germ of Thackeray's plot for Denis Duval may be found in The Annual Register of 1782, where the history is told of M. de la Motte and the traitor Lutherloh. The brothers Weston Thackeray describes as living in 'The Friars', were notorious characters - Joseph and George. They resided for many months in the year 1781-82 under the assumed names of William Johnson and Samuel Weston, and they made a great display, assuming the characters of Country gentlemen, and highly respectable ones at that time. The Annual Register, however, gives them a very different character. It calls them "two most notorious fellows, who for some years have defrauded the country by various artful contrivances".[3] They were at length captured in Wardour Street, London, March 17, and

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1. See Cambridge Modern History Vol V. PP. 858-59 for list of historical works dealing with this period
2. For a complete bibliography of Works on Anglo-American relations at this period see Cambridge Modern History Vol Vll p. 786-8.
3. See Annual Register for 1782, P. 206

committed, April, 17, 1782, for robbing the Bath and Bristol mail between Maidenhead and Hunslow, on the morning of January 29, 1781. On July 2 (the day before the sessions) they, with other three felons, made their escape from Newgate, having been aided by the wives of the Westons. But they were retaken and executed at Tyburn on September 3, 1782. Thackeray's Notes clearly explain the extent to which actual characters like M. de la Motte, Lutherloh, and the Weston brothers were to appear in the story.

If the Annual Register for 1782 provided Thackeray with the germ of his plot, he was able to fill in the details from the works he had used for Barry Lyndon and The Virginians, since the period is again practically the same. Since Denis Duval was to be a sea story he probably refreshed his memory of Smollet and Maryatt. Thackeray also made a special study of the local history of Winchelsea and Rye. For the account of Denis's exploits at sea he meant to use papers and particulars about the gallant conduct of Captain Pearson of the Serapis which had been given him by his old friend and neighbour, Admiral Fitzroy. Beatson's Naval and Military Memoirs (1804) also supplied him with information on Pearson's action with Paul Jones, which he meant to incorporate in the novel. "Of Pearson's career, which Denis must have followed in after days, there is more than one memorandum in Mr. Thackeray's note-book.

"Serapis, R. Pearson. 'Beatson's Memoirs'.

"Gentleman's Magazine, 49. PP. 484. Account of action with Paul Jones, 1779.

"Gentleman's Magazine, 502, PP. 84. Pearson Knighted, 1780." 1.

Among the Notes a number of references occur to the Gentleman's

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1. Denis Duval (Collier edition) P. 301.

Magazine from which Thackeray evidently drew some incidents, especially Denis's capture by a Dutch East Indiaman. "'Some sailors are lately arrived from Amsterdam on board the Laetitia, Captain March. They were taken out of the hold of a Dutch East Indiaman by the captain of the Kingston privateer, who having lost some of his people, gained some information of their fate from a music-girl, and had spirit enough to board the ship and search her. The poor wretches were all chained down in the hold, and but for this would have been carried to slavery.' - Gentleman's Magazine, 50 PP. 101."[1] For the social background he utilised contemporary newspapers as we see from Notes of "'a tailor contracts to supply three superfine suits for 11£ 11s.(Gazeteer and Daily Advertiser);' and also of a villa at Beckenham, with 'four parlours, eight bedrooms, stables, two acres of garden, and fourteen acres of meadow, let for 70£ a year.'"[2]

II DICKENS

Dickens's letters to Forster (who read the proofs of Barnaby Rudge assiduously, and made many suggestions) show that he spent much time and thought over its historical parts and the figure of Lord George Gordon. "In the description of the principal outrages," Dickens tells us, "reference has been made to the best authorities of that time, such as they are; and the account given in this tale of all of the main features of the Riots, is substantially correct."[3] The principal source of Barnaby Rudge was the Annual Register for 1780, and Dickens follows its

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1. Denis Duval (Collier edition)P. 303
2. Ibid. P. 308
3. See the author's preface to Barnaby Rudge, vii.

description of the Riots very closely. Two other accounts of the rioting which may have been known to him, were given, the one in A Plain and Succinct Narrative of the Riots and Disturbances, published in 1780 under the pseudonym of "William Vincent" of Gray's Inn,[1] and the other in the current number of Gentleman's Magazine.[2] Dickens may have consulted The Life of Lord George Gordon with a Philosophical Review of his Political Conduct (1795)[3] by Robert Watson, but he can have gained little from it, as it deals scarcely at all with the Riots and does not throw much light on the character of Lord George.

The sources of Dickens's historical information for A Tale of Two Cities is shown clearly enough by one incident. Charles Dickens the younger relates:- "While he (his father) was engaged in the preliminary work on the Tale of Two Cities, he asked Carlyle for the loan of a few such authorities as might be useful for his purpose, and promptly received from the historian of the French Revolution two cart-loads of books."[4] Whether he made use of the whole of this well-meant loan, we do not know; but it is evident from Dickens's letters and personal records that he admired the French Revolution, which he declared was the book of all others which he read perpetually and of which he never tired.

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1. It is said to have been the work of Thomas Holcroft, who "was employed by them (the booksellers, Fielding and Walker) to write a Pamphlet under the name of Wm. Vincent, Esq., of Gray's Inn, containing an account of the riots in 1780"- see The Life of Thomas Holcroft by W. Hazlitt (London: Constable, 1925) i.227.
2. See Gentleman's Magazine 1780, PP. 264-268.
3. See works cited in article on Lord George Gordon in Dictionary of National Biography. Vol XXII. P. 198
4. Introduction to A Tale of Two Cities ed. by Charles Dickens the Younger (London: Mac., 1902) XX

III CHARLES KINGSLEY

Kingsley's main sources for the historical background of Hypatia was Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire (1776-88),[1] but there were also contemporary writings from which he could draw useful information. He read steadily the works of the Christian Fathers. He assures us that "every expression of Pambo's is a crib from some one word for word."[2] He was also well acquainted with the philosophical and religious works of Synesius[3], whose Epistolae would be sepcially valuable, since a few of them describe Hypatia and her philosophy, and whose Hymns with their contemplative Neoplatonic character also suggested the intellectual atmosphere of the time. Other accounts of Hypatia which were at least available to Kingsley were the Lexicon of Suidas, which, however, was some six centuries later in date; and John Toland's Tetradymus (1720) and Fabricius's Bibliotheca Graeca.[4]

The historical basis of Westward Ho! rests mainly upon a few well-known sources, such as the collection of voyages Hakluyt entitled Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation (1589); Raleigh's Discovery of Guiana (1596); Spencer's View of the Present State of Ireland (1596); Purchas's Pilgrims (1613); Camden's Annals of Elizabeth (1615); Fuller's Worthies of England (1661); and Prince's Worthies of Devon (1701). The last two he studied to such good purpose that the whole story of John Oxenham as it appears in Westward Ho! may be accepted as a statement of fact. Prescott's History of Ferdinand and Isabella

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1. The story of Hypatia was given in its forty-seventh chapter.
2. See Kingsley's letter to J.M. Ludlow in Charles Kingsley: Letters etc. P. 135.
3. See article on Synesius in Encyclopeadia Britannica xxi. 709
4. See Vol ix., P. 187.

(1845), History of the Conquest of Mexico (1843), and History of the Conquest of Peru (1847) provided materials for much of the South American part of the novel. Besides this no great research is shown. Kingsley admitted that he wrote the book "without any access to town records, or to state papers, chiefly by the light of dear old Hakluyt,"[1] and that he obtained the suggestion for the novel and much of the material from his brother-in-law, Froude,[2] although the historian's great work had not been published.

In preparing to write Hereward the Wake Kingsley made a study of the Peterborough version of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle,[3] Historia Croyland endis,[4] Historia Eliensis,[5] Estorie des Engles and Gesta Herewardi Saxonis.[6] But he chose the material from the chronicles that suited his fictitious purposes, whether it was demonstrably accurate or not. Most of the picaresque episodes, such as Hereward's visits to the Norman camp in disguise are taken from the Gesta Herewardi. Hereward's end and the manner of his death are differently recorded in various early works. Florence of Worcester says that at the end of the siege of the camp of Refuge in Ely Hereward escaped through the marshes with a few companions, and that nothing more is known with

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1. See his letter to J. Cole on Jan. 7, 1866.
2. Froude, English Seamen in the Sixteenth Century (1895)
3. Commonly known by the name of Jugulf, who became abbot of Croyland in 1086; but certainly forged by the Croyland monks some three hundred years or more afterwards.
4. Compiled towards the close of the twelfth century by certain monks of Ely, two of whom appear to have borne the name of Richard.
5. Written in verse by Geoffrey Gaimar. Hereward is dealt with in a short passage of about 250 lines. This account belongs to the early part of the twelfth century.
6. Written by Richard of Ely, presumably one of the two Richards who wrote the Liber Etiensis

certainty of the rest of his life. But, according to the Gesta Herewardi, he obtained a pardon from William and died in peace. The Domesday book, however, records a Hereward as a holder of land which Hereward the Wake had possessed in the reign of Edward, and if this entry refers to the same person, Hereward must have been alive in 1086. But Geoffrey Gaimar in his Estorie des Engles gives an account of Hereward's death in which the details are practically the same as those related by Kingsley, down to the remark of one of Hereward's murderers, Ascelin, that "if there had been three more such men in this realm, they would have driven us and King William back again into the sea."[1]

IV. GEORGE ELIOT.

In gathering her material for Romola, George Eliot had read many works[2] which gave her precise knowledge of the manners and customs of 15th century Florence. The first book she consulted in the Magliabecchian Library was Feriario's Costume Antico e Moderno (1527?), an illustrated work, which gave her information on the customs of the period. Then she read Lippi's Malmantile (1676), a comic poem full of phrases, proverbs and quaint sayings, illustrated and explained by Canon A. M. Biscioni. His instructive notes enables George Eliot to insert in her novel many jests and sayings in order to make her characters speak the language of the period of which they wore the dress.

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1. Hereward the Wake (Macmillan edition: 1811) Vol. ii. P.336.
2. For the whole list of the books she read, see George Eliot's Life and Letters ii. 325-326.

To obtain the scenic background, she diligently studied the aspect of the city at the end of the fifteenth century, its topography and its various changes since in Leopoldo del Migliore's Firenze Illustrata (1684) and in Rastrelli's Firenza Antica e Moderna (1781) with such good results that the descriptions of places and ceremonies which she gives in Romola fully correspond with the illustrations from Migliore.

Some other works which she consulted in the Magliabecchian Library with some advantage are Buonaccorsi's Diario (1568), Cavalcanti's Istorie Fiorentine (1838), Neri's Istorie Fiorentine (1597), and Agostino Ademollo's Marietta dei Ricci (1840). The last-named book is an historical romance of no great merit but of some value for its learned digressions and notes on the old Florentine families, which it is possible George Eliot may have utilised for the genealogy of the Berdi family, to which she added the figure of her heroine. Besides, she was familiar with the eight volumes of Lastri's Osservatore Fiorentine (1776), which is the more immediate source of all her information about old Florence, and she buried herself in Book IX of Varchi's Storia Fiorentina (1704), which gives an accurate account of the old city. Most of her information about Savonarola and his times was derived from Pasquale Villari's La Vita di G. Savonarola (1859-61). And it was directly from it that she borrowed the important scene in which Baldassarre is first set free as a prisoner and meets Tito on the steps of the Cathedral.[1] George Eliot also studied the

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1. Villari was the only writer who, on the authority of the manuscript chronicles of Parenti and Carretani -to which George Eliot certainly had no access - describes the fray which arose for the liberation of the Lunigiana prisoners, a scene of which she made dramatic use in the second chapter of Book ii, entitled "The Prisoners."

Novelle (1724) of Sacchetti for the scene in the Mercato Vecchio and for the chapter entitled "A Florentine Joke" and the Veglie Piacevoli (1762) of Domenico Maria Manni for the character of the barber Nello, which is modelled upon that of his great predecessor, the jolly poet Burchiello. For particulars, again, she read: "1st, about Lorenzo de Medici's death; 2nd., about the possible retardation of Easter; 3rd., about Corpus Christi Day; 4th., about Savonarola's preaching in the Lent of 1492."[1] To gain familiarity with Florentine expressions, she twice read through Machiavelli's Mandragola (1525?).

V. MEREDITH

Besides the material he gained for Vittoria from his visits to Italy, Meredith must have read the accounts available of the career of Mazzini, the five-days revolution in Milan, the risings elsewhere and the campaigns of Charles Albert. Several histories of Italy during this period which dealt at some length with the Revolution of 1848-49, mostly in Italian had been published before Meredith began to write Vittoria.[2] They were L.C. Farini's Storia d'Italia del 1814 sino ai nostri giorni (1854-9) and F. Ranalli's Le Istorie Italiane del 1846 al 1853 (1855). There were also works specifically concerned with the events of the two revolutionary years in which the action of Vittoria takes place, such as F.A. Gualterio's Gli Ultimi Rivolgimenti Italiani Memorie storiche con documenti inediti (1850) and C. Cathanes's

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1. Journal, Jan. 26,1782, Life and Letters, ii. 332
2. For histories of Italy at this period see Cambridge Modern History xi. 909-11 and the bibliography given in Italy inthe Making by A.F.H. and J. Berkelay (Cambridge University Press, 1936)

L'Insurreziorie di Milans (1849).

The Princess Belgiojoso, who was probably the original of Laura Piaveni, wrote a book entitled L'Austria e la rivoluzione italiana in 1847, and though it could not have provided Meredith with historical details for events that occurred only after its publication, it would be invaluable for suggesting the patriotic sentiments of the Italians and their attitude towards the Austrians. The Life and Writings of Ginseppe Mazzini (1864-70) was just beginning to appear when Meredith began to write, but it is likely that he would consult the early volumes for details about the appearance, personality and achievements of the Italian patriot. For Charles Albert and his campaigns Meredith may have read L. Cibrario's Notizia Sulla Vita di Carlo Alberto (1861) and Ferdinando Pinelli's Storia Militare de Piemonte (1855).

Vl. PATER.

For Marius the Epicurean Pater skilfully selected from the art, history, literature, religion and philosophy of the period the material necessary for his purpose. Apart from Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, there were descriptions of Roman society in the writings of German and French scholars, such as Mommsen and Niebuhr, which Pater could use for every aspect of his work. Besides he had gleaned a great deal from his trips to Italy and his classical studies. The cult of Aesculapius, treated in an early chapter, must have been suggested to Pater by the excavations at Epidaurus in progress during the time of writing. To create a thoroughly Roman atmosphere Pater weaves in many quotations and ideas from Latin literature, in

addition to ideas from Greek philosophy.[1] The home life of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius seems built largely from his correspondence with Cornelius Fronto. And the Emperor's Golden Book is a frequent source for speeches and meditations. Besides there are the well-known Cupid and Psyche rendering from Apuleius, and two dialogues associated with the witty Lucian. The Augustan Histories furnished a convenient store of historical detail. Dio Cassius supplied "The Ceremony of the Dart," and Eusebius the letter from the Christian martyrs. The service near the house of St. Cecilia was built up from the Shepherd of Nermas, who wrote the Pilgrim's Progress of that day. And the youth Flavian is probably an imaginary portrait of the author of the haunting Pervigilium Veneris, which is now commonly ascribed to a later date.

Prosper Mérimée, one of Pater's favourite authors and one on whom he delivered a lecture in 1890[2] had written an historical romance, Chronigue du Règne de Charles 1X (1829), which is set in the same period as Gaston de Latour. Mérimée's novel has more romance and adventure in it than Gaston. It gives a fuller description of the historical background of the period especially of the Massacre of St. Bartholemew's Eve. But Pater describes Bernard de Mergy, Mérimée's hero, as "a winsome, yet withal serious and even piteous figure",[3] and it is in terms something like these that he must have conceived the character of Gaston. Pater does

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1. See Marius Chap Vlll "Animula Vagula".
2. Reprinted in Studies in European Literature being the Taylorian Lectures 1889-1899. (Oxford: 1900) PP.31-53.
3. Ibid P.40.

not sketch the manners and social life of the time in much detail, but he is probably indebted to Mérimée for what he does give.[1] Mérimée in his preface to the Chronique du Règne de Charles IX notes that he has formed his idea of sixteenth century France from such works as the Abbe de Brantôme's Oeuvres. (1852?); Marshal de Monluc's Mémoires (1864-72); François de La Noue's Mémoires (1819); and Marshal de Tavannes's Mémoires (1829). Presumably Pater was also acquainted with these memoirs and with François Eudes de Mezeray's Histoire de la Mére et du fils. (1731); the Mémoires of Henri, Duc de Guise (1819); and the Mémoires of Marguerite de Valois (1842).

But for Pater's purposes the philosophical and literary works of the time were more important sources and these he had read for his Studies in the History of the Renaissance (1873). Montaigne's Essays (1580-95) with their strong personal note would have provided Pater with most of the information necessary for portraying that writer. For Ronsard's portrait Pater could draw material from Ronsard's own Oeuvres, while he could utilise Bruno's works,[2] for the chapter on that philosopher.

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1. Mérimée, Pater notes, "knows with like completeness the mere fashions of the time - how courtier and soldier dressed themselves, and the large movements of the desperate game which fate or chance was playing with those pretty pieces." - Studies in European Literature P.40.
2. For list of Bruno's works and studies of his philosophy see article on Bruno in Encyclopeadia Britannica vol.48. P.287. The principal edition of Bruno's works, edited by Fioventino, Tocco and Vitelli appeared in Naples between 1879 and 1891.

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